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Cover illustration: Image from the interior of the Shitthaung-phaya, Mrauk-U, Yakhine State, Union of Myanmar, courtesy of Atsuko Naono (University of Michigan)

The Burma Development Disaster in Comparative Historical Perspective¹

Anne Booth²

Abstract

This paper reviews the post-independence performance of the Burmese economy. It is argued that the devastation of war and the slow pace of economic recovery after 1950 meant that Burma took a very long time even to regain levels of per capita GDP which had been attained in the 1930s. There has been very little change in the sectoral shares of either national product or the labour force. The paper explores the reasons for this long-term stagnation, and examines the implications for long-term changes in living standards. Comparisons are also made with other countries in Southeast Asia.

Modern Burma, or Myanmar as it has been officially termed in recent years, is widely considered to be Asia's principal development disaster. The country emerged into independence along with many others in South and Southeast Asia in the aftermath of the Second World War, and was seen at the time as having good development prospects (Steinberg 2001, 32-34). And yet by the end of the twentieth century it had fallen well behind most of its neighbours in terms of both per capita GDP, and other development indicators. In 1999, it was ranked lower than India according to the United Nations Human Development Index and far lower than China and the other member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), except for Laos and Cambodia (UNDP 2001, 142-3). Especially striking was the gap between Burma and Thailand, with whom it shares a long land border. Thailand's per capita GDP in 1999 was estimated to be slightly over six thousand dollars (corrected for purchasing power differences) compared with just over one thousand dollars in Burma.

For most international observers, there is little doubt about the allocation of blame for contemporary Burma's plight. After the army coup of 1962, a military regime led by General Ne Win adopted a series of policies aimed at converting Burma to a strictly socialist and autarkic economy. Certainly the country faced serious economic and political problems in the immediate aftermath of independence, including several secessionist movements among ethnic minorities in border regions. But as a recent obituary article pointed out, Ne Win did not manage to solve any of these problems. In fact

his policy of state control, isolation and repression made things worse. Ethnic groups became bolder. Opium chiefs expanded their fiefs and corrupted the soldiers sent to close them down. Burma had been the world's largest exporter of rice, but by 1973 could hardly provide enough for its own

¹ This is a revised version of a paper presented at the conference "Burma-Myanma(r) Research and its Future: Implications for Scholars and Policymakers" University of Gothenberg, Sweden, September 21-25, 2002. I am grateful to conference participants, and to R.M. Sundrum for helpful comments

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needs. Income per person fell from \$670 a year in 1960 to \$200 in 1989. Despite having good farmland, high quality timber such as teak and minerals including oil, Burma was rated one of the world's poorest countries.³

In what follows, I will try to evaluate whether this is an entirely accurate account of the Ne Win years. Certainly it is one which is widely accepted, in Burma as well as abroad. In 1988, after massive protests in Rangoon and other cities, a new military junta took over and Ne Win retired, although he was rumoured to still exercise power behind the scenes (American Embassy 1996, 39). A reasonably free election was held in 1990 which was won by the National League for Democracy, led by Aung San Suu Kyi. But the military regime refused to recognise this result and has maintained its grip on power, although for much of the 1990s it tried to liberalise the economy, and allow a greater role for the domestic private sector and for foreign investors. But in contrast to Vietnam, where the Vietnamese Communist Party embarked on similar reforms at the same time, and in contrast to other Asian military-led regimes which gave high priority to economic reform, such as Park's in Korea and Suharto's in Indonesia, the results which have been achieved in Burma in terms of accelerated growth and improved living standards have been disappointing.

Recent evaluations of the economy by the US government, international development organisations and by independent academics have been critical of the lack of progress in implementing reform, and of the growing role of the illegal trade in narcotics (American Embassy 1996; Tun Wai 1996; Dapice 1998; UNDP 1998; US Department of Commerce, 1999; International Monetary Fund, 1999; Mya Than, 2000; Khin Maung Kyi et al. 2000; Steinberg 2001, chapter 5, Appendix 1; Asian Development Bank 2002). All these studies stress continued high military expenditures, low and declining revenues from legal taxes, low rates of saving and investment, extensive state involvement in the economy, poor financial performance of the large state enterprise sector, inadequate and deteriorating infrastructure, and declining government expenditures on health and education.

The purpose of this paper is not to challenge these evaluations, but rather to examine the performance of the Burmese economy in a longer time span than has been adopted in most recent studies, with a particular emphasis on comparisons with other Asian, and especially ASEAN economies. First, I will examine Burma's colonial legacy, and the transition to independence. I will argue that in several respects Burma in the immediate aftermath of independence faced problems which were more severe than those faced by most other Southeast Asian countries, and which placed substantial obstacles in the path of the broadly democratic governments which controlled the country until 1962. I then examine patterns of growth and structural change during the Ne Win years from 1962 to 1988. My main argument is that these years were marked not so much by falling per capita GDP as by a collapse of the export economy. In addition, (paradoxically for a regime which styled itself socialist) this period was characterised by a decline in government budgetary expenditures relative to GDP, and in the ability of the central government to carry out rational economic planning. The third part of the paper evaluates the performance of the economy after 1988, while in the concluding section, I will examine trends in growth and structural change in the economy over the twentieth century as a whole. Here I will argue that Burma presents a picture of economic and structural stagnation over a period of seven decades which is unique in Asia.

³*Economist*, December 14, 2002, p. 96

The Colonial Legacy and the Transition to Independence

In an appraisal of economic progress in Southeast Asia in the immediate aftermath on the second world war, Paauw (1963, 556) argued that the major economies in the region had grown at widely diverging rates. The star performer was the Philippines which recovered rapidly from the devastation of war and occupation, and after regaining pre-war levels of per capita GDP in 1950 grew at three per cent per annum in per capita terms over the 1950s. Thailand and what was then British Malaya (including Singapore) also recovered quite rapidly and achieved positive per capita growth rates in the 1950s, although Paauw considered progress in both economies to be 'unsteady'. But in 'Burma, Indonesia, and the Indochinese countries of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, progress has taken the form primarily of restoring prewar levels of per capita production; it is unlikely that gains above prewar levels have been achieved'.

In the forty years since Paauw's estimates were published, new national income figures have become available for several Southeast Asian countries, which suggest that Paauw's claims were broadly correct for Thailand, but too optimistic for Burma, Indonesia and Vietnam. In Thailand, per capita GDP was already above the 1938 figure by 1950 (Sompop 1989). But in Indonesia and in both North and South Vietnam, per capita GDP in 1960 was still below 1938, and indeed 1929 levels. This was also the case in Burma (Table 1). In fact the official national income statistics released over the 1950s indicated that per capita gross domestic product in 1947/48 was only about 64 per cent of the 1938/39 level which was itself still well below the 1931/32 figure as estimated by Aye Hlaing (Table 2). By the early 1950s, per capita GDP in Burma, in international dollars corrected for terms of trade fluctuations, was less than 30 per cent of that in the Philippines, about 30 per cent of the Thai figure, and less than half that in India (Table 3).

Burma's output contraction in the 1930s, which was more severe than in most other parts of Southeast Asia, was entirely due to the very poor performance of the agricultural sector (Booth 2003). That in turn was related to the severe effects of falling rice prices on indebted farmers in the main rice-growing areas, which in many cases led to loss of land. The newly independent government gave high priority to reform of both the land tenure system and agricultural credit, 'the twin evils' of prewar Burmese agriculture (Trager 1958, 39-40). A prosperous and productive agricultural sector was viewed as the foundation on which a more diversified economy could be constructed. The government was also determined to use taxation and other revenues to increase spending on both infrastructural development and health, education and welfare. In contrast to the prewar economy where Burma had made large subventions to the budget of British India, and received little back in return, there was a determination to use national resources to improve the welfare of the entire population⁴.

Over the 1950s, the government was successful in increasing budgetary revenues relative to GDP; by the latter part of the decade the ratio of revenues to GDP was almost twice that of 1938/39 (Table 4). Government expenditures also rose rapidly; in contrast to the colonial era the government budget was in deficit for most of the 1950s, although relative to GDP the deficits were not large. But ethnic and communist insurgencies necessitated a sharp increase in military expenditures, which accounted for around 30 per cent of total budgetary outlays for much of the decade. Although expenditure on

⁴See Shein, Thant and Sein (1969) for an analysis of the impact of the provincial contract system on Burma. They show that total revenues raised in Burma were above total expenditures in Burma from 1890 onwards, often by a very considerable margin. An extended discussion of colonial fiscal policy is given in Aye Hlaing (1965), Chapter III.

infrastructure development and on health and education did increase, relative to GDP, compared with 1938/39, the bold ambitions of the immediate post-independence era to build a welfare state in Burma were only very partially realised.

There were those who argued that Burma's failure to achieve prewar levels of per capita GDP during the 1950s was not just due to the unfavourable colonial legacy, wartime devastation, and high government expenditures on defence. In a paper written in the mid-1960s, a well-known Burmese economist, Hla Myint, drew a distinction between what he termed the "inward" and "outward" looking economies of Southeast Asia. He argued that there were at that time two discernible patterns of economic development in Southeast Asia, typified by Burma and Indonesia on the one hand, and Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines on the other. (He did not explicitly consider the countries of former Indochina). Myint pointed out that while all the countries of South East Asia shared a common reaction after independence to what might be termed "the colonial economic pattern", the nature of the reaction differed between these two groups. The Philippines, Thailand and (British) Malaya

seemed to have sensed early that it would be easier and quicker to change the economic structure and the pattern of distribution of incomes and economic activities if the total volume of national output were expanding rapidly than in a situation of economic stagnation or slow growth. They also seemed to have realised that, given the basic conditions of their economies, the key to expanding their total national product was to be found in expanding the volume of their exports. Since a large share of these exports was produced by the foreign-owned mines and plantations, the governments of these countries took care to guarantee the security of foreign property and freedom to remit profits, and generally created a favourable economic environment which encouraged the foreign enterprises not only to continue their existing production but also to undertake new investments, to strike out into new lines of exports and to introduce new methods of production and organisation (Myint 1967: 2-3).

In contrast, Myint continued, the political leadership of Burma and Indonesia at that time "were obsessed by the fear" that once foreign enterprises were allowed to re-establish themselves or expand their operations, they would resume their old stranglehold over the economy, and re-impose the colonial economic pattern whereby most profits were remitted abroad, and the local populations gained little benefit from the exploitation of the economy's abundant natural resources. Myint argued that both countries did little to attract new investment and indeed nationalised a number of foreign-owned firms. They also adopted hostile policies to their Chinese and Indian minorities, so that many left either for their ancestral homelands or to settle in third countries. Nor did they encourage entrepreneurship among the indigenous majority; in both countries smallholder producers of export crops were taxed through export taxes and marketing boards, and there was little investment in infrastructure or new cultivation technologies which would directly benefit smallholder producers.

In some respects Myint's critique might seem too harsh, at least for the period up to 1962. Certainly the policies pursued after 1950 were not conducive to rapid export growth, and after the Korean War boom of the early 1950s, export earnings fell relative to GDP (Table 2). Burma's share of total exports from Southeast Asia also fell (Table 5). But this decline reflected in part at least declining markets in the USA and elsewhere for rice. The government could have done more to attract foreign investment, although Asia as a whole attracted little foreign investment in the years between 1950 and 1970. Most American investment went to Europe and Latin America, and Japan had not yet begun to invest abroad on a significant scale. A sizeable population of Indians and Chinese continued to

live in Burma until the early 1960s, and the government tolerated their presence even if their domination of some sectors was resented⁵. Perhaps most important of all, the economy did achieve reasonable growth over the 1950s; per capita GDP growth was around three per cent per annum between 1951 and 1960. Although this was not enough to restore prewar levels of GDP, it did mean that most households were better off at the end of the 1950s than they were a decade earlier.

The Ne Win Era: 1962-1988

The Myint critique of 'inward-looking' policies was more applicable to the years after 1962, when the thrust of government policy was deliberately towards greater isolation from the world economy, and towards a planned, socialist economy with only a very restricted role for the private sector. The first objective was largely achieved, at least as far as recorded economic activity was concerned, by the end of the 1970s. But the government's success in achieving the second objective was more problematic. After 1962, production for export was discouraged through increasing over-valuation of the exchange rate, and total bans on any new foreign investment in export-oriented agriculture, mining or industry. Production of rice, which was the main export staple of the pre-war era, had regained pre-war levels in the early 1960s (Richter 1976, table 3). But because of the growth in population, and procurement and exchange rate policies which made production for export increasingly unprofitable, the exportable surplus fell from 2.8 million tons in the latter part of the 1930s to under 0.5 million tons by the early 1970s (Richter 1976: table 1). By 1965, exports from Burma accounted for less than five per cent of the ASEAN total compared to over 11 per cent in 1937 (Table 5). Exports per capita, in nominal US dollars, were by the early 1970s only one third of the level achieved in 1934-38 (Table 6). The contrast with other ASEAN economies, and with Taiwan, was glaring.

In spite of the socialist rhetoric, the government was also notably unsuccessful in mobilising more resources or in increasing government budgetary expenditures relative to GDP. By the mid-1970s, government revenues amounted to only about 12 per cent of GDP, a sharp decline from the late 1950s. Government expenditure also declined relative to GDP (Table 4). The main policies adopted by the government in pursuit of the "Burmese way to socialism" were nationalisation of both foreign and domestic businesses, starting with the Burmah Oil Company and the Indo-Burma Petroleum Company, and the expulsion of many Indians, Chinese and Anglo-Burmans (Tun Wai 1996, 158-9). No attempt was made to collectivise agriculture, although the government did attempt to dictate which crops were to be sown in specific regions. Nor did the government succeed in implementing East European or Soviet-style central planning:

Early efforts to introduce classical central planning techniques were quickly abandoned, in part because data were unreliable and in part because planners trained in Eastern Europe were never fully integrated into the Burmese state apparatus...Expertise was insufficient to run the private businesses that had been nationalised. There was overoptimistic reporting on the economic situation and downplaying of difficulties, especially in the oil sector, as officials feared they would lose their jobs if targets were not met (Tun Wai 1996, 158-9).

But in spite of the failure of central planning, Burma did not escape some of the negative aspects of Soviet-style regimes. After 1962, the number of state economic enterprises (SEEs) grew rapidly, and by the early 1980s, their expenditures accounted for

⁵The estimates of post-war population given by Sundrum (1958, 54) show that in 1955, the foreign (i.e. non-indigenous) population accounted for 16 per cent of the total urban population.

around 50 percent of GDP (Table 4). Most of the SEEs faced the 'soft budget constraints' which were typical of East Europe and the former Soviet Union. Managers had little incentive to make profits, as state banks extended loans to cover losses. Spasmodic attempts at reform, often mandated by foreign donors, did not produce lasting benefits and overall deficits worsened over the 1980s (Cook 1994, 123). Although the state budget was in surplus, at least until the mid-1970s, the deficits of the state enterprise sector more than outweighed the budget surpluses (Tun Wai 1996, 179). The overall deficit of the government sector, funded by credit creation, fueled inflation and the black market rate of the *kyat* fell sharply relative to the official rate. Official export and import trade was controlled by the state, but there was virtually no incentive to produce for legal export and by 1980 Burma's share of ASEAN exports had fallen to less than one per cent (Table 5).

The upshot of these policy failings was that economic growth was sluggish over the 1960s and early 1970s, and per capita gross domestic product only returned to 1938/39 levels in 1976. It regained the pre-war maximum attained in 1931/32 in 1981 (Figures 1 and 2). The years from 1976 to 1985 saw some improvement in GDP growth, mainly due to improved performance in agriculture. The net value of agricultural output almost doubled between 1974/75 and 1985/6 (Mya Than 1988, table 4). This increase was due to increases in output per unit of land, as net sown area did not change much over the decade. But the technology-driven improvement in the agricultural sector was not sustained after the mid-1980s, and other sectors of the economy continued to stagnate. In the latter part of the 1980s per capita GDP fell, so that the 1991 level was still below that of sixty years earlier (Figure 1).

It is instructive to compare the performance of the Burma economy after 1962 with that of Indonesia, which was the other Southeast Asian economy characterised by Myint as 'inward looking'. In the mid-1960s the two economies had a number of features in common including large public sector deficits, mounting inflation and an over-valued exchange rate. An abortive coup in late September 1965 led to the fall of President Soekarno and the rise to power of a little-known army officer, Soeharto. He assembled around him a team of American-educated economists, who implemented a package of policies designed to end inflation and accelerate economic growth. A new foreign investment law was passed in 1967 and by 1970 the exchange rate was unified at a much lower level, which ended smuggling and gave greater incentives to domestic producers of traded goods. These policies, together with a considerable improvement in Indonesia's terms of trade, ushered in three decades of continuous economic growth, during which per capita GDP almost quadrupled (Figure 1). By the end of the 1980s, reformers in Burma, including some in the military were asking whether Burma also should not embark on similar economic reforms.

Post-1998 Reform Policies

During the early 1990s the military junta which took power in 1988 effected a partial liberalisation of the domestic economy, and a more positive effort was made by the government to attract foreign investment (Myat Thein and Mya Than 1995, 216-24). A dual exchange rate regime was introduced and by the mid-1990s, it was claimed that few transactions, apart from intra-public sector ones, took place at the grossly over-valued rate. Indeed a report issued by the American Embassy in Rangoon argued that although the existence of the official rate 'continues to complicate foreign investment, it is no longer an impediment to economic growth or a major source of macroeconomic instability' (American Embassy 1996, 2-3). These attempts to move away from the inward-looking policies of the previous three decades did lead to an acceleration in economic growth; average annual growth in per capita GDP accelerated to 3.9 per cent between 1988 and 1999, although many doubts were raised about the accuracy of the data (See appendix).

As in previous growth spurts, improved agricultural performance was the main factor contributing to the growth of output. The agricultural and trade sectors together accounted for over half of total growth in GDP between 1988 and 1999 (Table 7).

But by the latter part of the 1990s it was clear that the military regime (now known as the SPDC, the State Peace and Development Council) was not emulating the 'hard' developmental states such as South Korea under Park or Indonesia under Soeharto. While the regime achieved some success in ending border insurgencies, it proved unable to solve 'three of Burma's most intractable problems - ethnic disunity, economic underdevelopment, and drugs production and trafficking' (Rudland and Pedersen 2000, 9). There is little doubt that the bargains struck between the government and various insurgent groups in border areas have encouraged those with large drug fortunes at their disposal to 'whiten' at least part of their wealth holdings by repatriating them into the domestic economy. This was probably an important reason for the relative stability of the free market rate of the kyat in the latter part of the 1990s, when many ASEAN currencies underwent sharp depreciations (Lintner 2000, 189). Just how dependent the Burmese economy has become on drug money since the early 1990s is unclear. But there can be little dispute that Burma's heroin production, now the largest in the world, comprises a substantial, although unrecorded, part of GDP.

But after 1998, the factors maintaining the stability of the free market rate of the *kyat*, whether drugs profits, legal inward flows of foreign investment or remittances from overseas Burmese, were no longer sufficient to maintain the parity at around 350 to the dollar. By December 2000 it had fallen to 430 to the dollar, and by February 2003 to 1,100 to the dollar⁶. The reasons for this sharp decline lie with the increasing domestic rate of inflation relative to international rates, which is due to rapid growth in the money supply. Although expenditures of the SEEs declined relative to GDP in the early 1990s, the government failed to bring under control the SEEs' deficits and the deficit on the government budget, which appears to have been funded largely by borrowing from the banking system.

The growing budget deficit was in turn the result of the steep decline in tax revenues relative to GDP which occurred over the 1990s (Table 4). By the mid-1990s, the tax/GDP ratio was around one third of that achieved in the late 1950s. However substantial tax revenues were being levied in kind, especially in the form of 'uncompensated, often involuntary labour' (American Embassy 1996, 85). The burden of such taxes fell largely on rural households, who were often very poor. Budgetary expenditures also fell relative to GDP over the 1990s, although not as fast as tax revenues. Defence expenditures recorded in the budget had risen to three per cent of GDP by the mid-1990s, and accounted for about 30 per cent of total budgetary expenditures.

Legal exports continued to fall relative to those of other ASEAN countries, and by 1998 Burma accounted for only 0.3 per cent of ASEAN exports (Table 5). Net private capital inflows from all sources, although positive in the latter part of the 1990s were very low in comparison to most other ASEAN countries (Asian Development Bank 2001, table 39). The government has blamed the Asian Crisis of 1997/98 for the falling off in inward investment flows but the real explanations lie with international sanctions, threats of consumer boycotts in the USA and elsewhere, and the unstable domestic inflationary climate.

⁶ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 14, 2000, February 27, 2003.

Longer term Development Issues

Growth and Structural Change In spite of the record of slow economic growth in per capita terms over the last half of the 20th century, aggregate output in Burma has grown. Although there are serious problems with the data, it does appear that per capita GDP doubled between 1950 and 1985, and after the retrogression in the latter part of the 1980s, there was further growth over the 1990s, although the rate of growth shown by the official data may well be overstated (Figure 1). We would therefore expect some structural change since 1950, as predicted by Kuznets and other scholars of modern economic growth. The share of agriculture in total GDP should have fallen over time, and that of the industrial sector (including manufacturing industry) and the modern service sector should have grown.

But no such structural transformation seems to have occurred. The share of agriculture in GDP did fall somewhat between 1947/48 and 1973/74 but rose thereafter, so that by the end of the 1990s, agriculture accounted for much the same proportion of total national product as it had in 1938/39. Similarly the share of agriculture in the total labour force, as recorded in population censuses and labour force surveys, has changed little since the British Indian census of 1931 (Table 8). Such a lack of structural change is almost unique among the economies of Asia in the second half of the 20th century. What explains it?

First we should bear in mind that many agricultural prices in Burma have been controlled by the government and subject to sudden and quite major changes. One study noted that the high share of agriculture in GDP in the latter part of the 1980s and 1990s is at least in part due to the decontrol of paddy purchase prices in 1987 (Than Nyun 1990: 22). But even allowing for these changes, Than Nyun argued that "the overall structure of production has not changed substantially over the last fifty years". This indeed is supported by the labour force data.

A further explanation lies in the weak growth performance of the non-agricultural sectors, especially the manufacturing sector. In most other ASEAN economies, including the slow-growing economy of the Philippines, the industrial share of GDP has grown since 1950, and the share of manufactured exports in total exports has also expanded, to the point where manufactures now account for between 40 and 80 per cent of total exports in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia (World Bank 2002: 238-9). There has been no such development in Burma. The available data indicate that the share of manufacturing in GDP grew quite rapidly after independence, and by 1961 had reached at least 10 per cent (Table 8). After that it appears to have fallen slightly, although there was a change in the composition of manufacturing output over the 1980s, towards food and beverage processing and away from clothing (Lutkenhorst 1990, table 4).

The reforms of the early 1990s do not appear to have increased the share of manufacturing in either GDP or the labour force. Indeed the liberalisation of border trade has led to a flood of manufactured products from both Thailand and China, with which local industries can compete neither in terms of quality or price. As a percentage of GDP, value added in manufacturing is only slightly higher in 1999 than in 1988; the manufacturing sector only accounted for about ten per cent of the growth in real GDP over these years (Table 7). If the official data are to be believed, the manufacturing sector accounted for a lower percentage of the employed labour force in 1995 than in 1931⁷. It is also surprising that the reforms of the 1990s did not lead to a higher share of sectors such

⁷ The higher proportion in 1931 could be due to a larger number of workers enumerated as active in small-scale and cottage industry, rather than in industry.

as trade and finance in GDP, as these sectors were re-opened to private sector initiatives after more than two decades of government domination. Guyot (1988, 113-4) argues that the main structural change after 1962 was a fall in the share of the trade sector in GDP, from about 30 per cent in 1961/62 to 20 per cent two decades later. This percentage appears to have changed little over the 1990s. The fastest growing sector in the post-1988 era was construction, although it accounted for less than five per cent of GDP in 1988, and only contributed eight per cent of the total growth over these years (Table 7).

But if there has been little change in the structure of output and employment in Burma over the last 50 years, there has been a dramatic change in the pattern of final demand in the economy, as shown by the GDP data broken down by expenditure (Table 9). In the late 1930s, private and government consumption expenditures accounted for just under 71 per cent of total GDP, investment for 12 per cent, while the balance (17 per cent) was accounted for by net exports. By the early 1950s, the share of consumption had risen to 76 per cent of GDP, and investment to 18 per cent. Net exports were still positive but had fallen to just over five per cent. Since then the trend has been towards a growing share of government and private consumption in GDP, and a falling share of investment, while net exports have become negative (Table 9). Both exports and imports have accounted for under five per cent of GDP in the 1990s.

The explanations for these trends are complex. Certainly, as Nyun (1990: 22-4) argued, there was a deliberate policy after independence to divert both rice and petroleum products (the two main export staples before 1940) to domestic consumption, which increased at the expense of exports after 1950. After 1960, the increasing over-valuation of the *kyat* meant that exports and imports were undervalued in the national accounts compared with non-traded goods and services. This also affected valuation of investment expenditures, as most investment goods were imported. In addition, official exchange rate policies provided few incentives to producers of traded goods, and over time more resources went into production of non-traded goods, or into production of exports which were smuggled out of the country.

Indeed the collapse of Burma's recorded export sector after 1960 is quite staggering, especially in comparison with the export growth which has taken place in other parts of Asia. In nominal dollars, per capita exports from Burma were a third of their 1934-38 level in 1969-73, and although there was some growth thereafter, they were still very low in the 1990s compared with their ASEAN partners (Table 6). Of course it must be stressed that these figures refer to legal exports and ignore the widespread smuggling which has occurred since the 1960s. Also excluded are illegal exports of drugs.

Accommodating a Growing Population in Agriculture Given that agriculture remains the main source of income for the majority of Burmese households, it is important to examine the process by which a growing population has been accommodated in the agricultural sector. Burma is often portrayed as a land-abundant country, with quite low population densities compared with much of Asia, a lower number of agricultural workers per arable hectare, and considerable reserves of unexploited agricultural land. FAO figures show that Burma averaged just under two agricultural workers per hectare of arable land in the late 1990s, which was less than half the figure for Vietnam, Bangladesh and China, and lower than Indonesia and the Philippines although much higher than Thailand (FAO 1999). Only 17 per cent of agricultural land was irrigated, a very low ratio by Asian standards.

Over the twentieth century, the cultivated area in Burma has grown, but not as fast as the agricultural labour force. In 1931, net sown area per agricultural worker was around 1.5 hectares, which was considerably higher than in Japan, Taiwan or Java at the same

time⁸. In the four decades from 1931 to 1971, net sown area per agricultural worker fell to around 1.1 hectares (Table 10). This was still quite a high figure by Asian standards. In addition, an increase in the cropping ratio offset this decline to some extent, so that gross sown area per agricultural worker declined rather more slowly. From 1971 to 1995 there was a steady decline in net sown area per agricultural worker, although the increase in the cropping ratio which occurred in the early 1990s led to an increase in gross cropped area per agricultural worker (Table 10).

Given this relative land abundance, together with a steady increase in the cropping ratio, it might be thought that most agricultural workers in Burma have cultivated their own holdings, and few have been tenants or employed as agricultural labourers. But in 1931 almost 40 per cent of the male agricultural labour force were in these categories (Table 11). This must have reflected the increasing dispossession of cultivating farmers by money lenders, which created not just large numbers of tenant farmers but also many rural households which were almost totally dependent on wage labour. After independence, official policy was to eliminate tenancy and landlessness through land nationalisation and redistribution⁹. After 1970 official data on tenancy was no longer given in the annual Reports to the People's Assembly (*Pyithu Hluttaw*), on the grounds that after land nationalisation, it no longer existed (Steinberg 1981: 127-28). The 1983 Population Census did not offer any information on the extent of tenancy but it did suggest that landlessness (as indicated by the proportion of the agricultural labour force working as employees) was far from eliminated in the early 1980s (Table 11).

Since then the problem may well have become worse. The Agricultural Census carried out in 1993 found that there were 2.95 million households with agricultural holdings, comprising 15.9 million people (American Embassy 1996, 36). If we assume that half are economically active (slightly higher than the estimate for the country as a whole in 1993) then this suggests that around eight million agricultural workers were in households which had access to land, compared with a total agricultural labour force in 1993 of almost eleven million (Asian Development Bank 2001, 267). The remaining three million must have been in households with no access to land. Such estimates are very rough, but they are supported by a few longitudinal village studies which suggest growing numbers of landless households (Mya Than 1987, 71).

Many rural households which did cultivate land were facing severe hardship by the mid-1990s. Taxation of farm incomes through government export controls which depress farmgate prices, and through corve labour obligations is heavy. Only the largest farmers get access to credit and agricultural machinery. Indeed it has been argued that a process of land concentration is underway which is producing an agrarian structure closer to the Philippines and Latin America rather than to the more egalitarian Asian countries such as Taiwan (Dapice 1998, 157).

⁸Hayami, Ruttan and Southworth (1979) give a thorough examination of the growth of agricultural land and labour in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and South Korea over the century from 1870 to 1970. In Japan in the 1870s there was only 0.3 hectares of arable land per agricultural worker although there was a slow growth in land per worker after 1900.

⁹ Land nationalisation was enacted in 1948, but implementation was slow. Steinberg (1981: 126) points out that some tenants were evicted as a result of land nationalisation and became landless labourers. He also argues that, because land nationalisation in effect made the state the landlord, it did not eliminate insecurity of tenure for many cultivators. In their survey of agricultural performance in Burma, Mya Than and Nishizawa (1990: 91) argue that the main thrust of post-independence land policy in Burma has been to "break up the landlord-tenant relationship in order to create a new government-owner-cultivator relationship and, at the same time, to strengthen government control over farmers".

Trends in Living Standards since 1950

During the colonial era, many travellers in British India compared living standards in Burma very favourably with those in other parts of the sub-continent, and these positive impressions were supported by official opinion, backed up by admittedly sketchy statistics (Steinberg 1981, 84). Burma certainly had much higher literacy rates than the rest of British India at the time of independence, mainly because of the tradition of monastic education. As Steinberg (1981, 93) noted, "to be illiterate indicated a lack of moral standing". This attitude extended to women as well as men, and British officials frequently noted the widespread ability of Burmese women to both read and write, in sharp contrast to the situation in the rest of the subcontinent. After independence, the government placed considerable emphasis on increasing access to education, and on adult literacy campaigns. The 1983 Population Census reported that 86 per cent of males over the age of ten and 73.5 per cent of women were literate.

Other indicators of living standards, such as infant mortality and life expectancy also improved after independence, although data on health and demographic indicators were often poor outside the larger towns. By the early 1970s, life expectancy at birth was estimated to be just under fifty years which was lower than in the Philippines, China and Thailand and about the same as India, Indonesia and Vietnam (UNDP 2001, 166-69). But these three countries all managed to increase life expectancy more rapidly than Burma over the next 25 years, so that in the latter part of the 1990s, life expectancy in Burma was lower than in most neighbouring countries except Laos and Cambodia. As already noted, the United Nations Human Development Index which is based on an average of educational, health and income indicators ranked Burma at 118 in 2001, which was towards the bottom of the "medium development group" UNDP 2001, 143).

There can be little doubt that the main reason for Burma's failure to achieve improvements in health indicators commensurate with those achieved in neighbouring countries since the 1970s is that budgetary allocations to the health sector have not kept up with inflation and population growth. Between 1963 and 1983, annual real per capita expenditure on health increased fivefold. But after 1983, expenditures began to fall and by 1996, real per capita expenditures were only 41 per cent of the level reached in 1983 (UNDP 1998: 30). By the mid-1990s health expenditures amounted to only 0.5 per cent of GDP, which was a very low percentage in comparison with most other Asian economies. Public health facilities in most parts of the country were reported to be in poor shape, and offered only a very limited range of treatments. Private health care was expanding but most private facilities were in urban areas and often charged high fees (UNDP 1998: 31). Over the 1990s, there was also a decline in real per capita expenditures on education.

The health and education data suggest a rather paradoxical trend in Burma in the latter half of the twentieth century. In the immediate post-independence era, and indeed in the first two decades of the Ne Win regime, there was significant improvement in social indicators. This progress was accompanied by steady growth in per capita consumption expenditures (as reported in the national accounts), which had returned to 1938 levels by the late 1970s and were almost a third higher than in 1938/39 by 1985/86 (Figure 2). There was also a substantial increase in domestic rice availability per capita; Richter's estimates suggest that it increased by over 30 per cent between the late 1940s and the late 1960s (Table 12). There was probably some increase over the 1970s as well¹⁰. The

¹⁰The *Report on the Survey of Household Expenditures of 1958 for Rangoon* presented a comparison of the 1958 survey with one carried out in Rangoon in 1927. While per capita consumption of rice, pulses, eggs and oils had increased, that of meat, poultry and fish had declined. It is likely that these trends reflect changing relative prices more than changing incomes.

improvement in domestic rice consumption was partly the result of increasing real consumer purchasing power, but also the result of the deliberate government policy of diverting the exportable surplus to the domestic market at prices which were well below world market prices.

But the policy of favouring consumers over producers inevitably damaged producer incentives and encouraged smuggling of both rice and rice products (American Embassy 1996, 33). The government was forced to respond to this by increasing producer prices, and also prices to the consumer. Domestic rice consumption does not appear to have increased significantly since the early 1970s; indeed the household expenditure survey carried out in 1997 reported an average per capita rice consumption of 5.92 *pyi* (12.6 kg) or just over 150kg per annum which is little different from the figure estimated by Richter for the late 1960s¹¹. Over the early 1990s, the national accounts data show falling per capita consumption expenditures (Figure 2), in spite of the growth in total GDP. Although there was some recovery in the latter part of the decade, real per capita consumption expenditures in 1999 were still below the level achieved in 1985, and only 22 per cent higher than in 1938/39¹².

In 1999 the International Monetary Fund argued that Burma's record in poverty reduction was "poor compared to most other East Asian economies" (International Monetary Fund 1999: 30). In 1997, a comprehensive Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) was carried out which permitted the estimation of poverty incidence by region¹³. It was found that nationally 23 per cent of the population fell below a poverty line set in terms of a packet of basic needs, and that there was wide variation by region, with the incidence of poverty much higher in rural than in urban areas. Given that this was the first HIES to be carried out in Burma on a national scale, it is not possible to estimate trends in poverty over time. But there is little evidence to suggest that the incidence of poverty has declined significantly over the 1990s; indeed it could have increased¹⁴.

The government's failure to convert the accelerated growth in real GDP which occurred over the 1990s into improved living standards for the bulk of the population has been attributed in several recent reports to failures in government policy. The UNDP (1998: 32) argued that four "prominent factors have constrained human development in Myanmar": low tax mobilization, high defence expenditures, weak public administration and an uncertain policy environment. In the mid-1990s Burma's ratio of tax to GDP had fallen to historically low levels, and was much lower than in other ASEAN economies or in India (International Monetary Fund 1999: 16). Budgetary expenditures on defence were twice as high as those on health and education, and the ratio was much higher than in neighbouring countries (UNDP 1998: 33). Both the UNDP and the International Monetary Fund placed the blame for poor government revenue mobilization on the weak and corrupt

In addition the ethnic composition of the city had changed greatly over these three decades, which would have affected household consumption patterns.

¹¹The *1958 Survey of Household Expenditures* reported that monthly per capita rice consumption in Rangoon was 12.9 kg., which was slightly higher than that reported in the 1997 Household Survey for Yangon (11.5 kg). This could be explained by the fact that the 1958 data include rice donated to monks; it is not clear whether such donations are also included in the 1997 figure.

¹²It should be noted that the national income data do not distinguish between government consumption expenditures and household consumption expenditures. To the extent that the former grew more rapidly than the latter over the 1990s, growth in household consumption expenditures would have been lower than is suggested in Figure 2.

¹³The analysis of the 1997 survey and the estimation of poverty were carried out by the World Bank in a study that has not yet been generally released.

¹⁴If average per capita consumption expenditures have not greatly increased over the 1990s, or even declined, while at the same time the distribution of consumption expenditures have become more skewed, it is likely that the extent of poverty has increased.

administrative system, which was in turn the result of salary erosion caused by high inflation. In addition, the International Monetary Fund drew attention to the generous tax exemptions which have been granted to favoured investors in large-scale agricultural projects.

Burma as a Development Disaster

The evidence is incontrovertible that the pace of economic change in Burma has been painfully slow in the last half of the twentieth century in comparison with most of its neighbours, not just in South East Asia but also in South Asia and China. The government's application to have Burma reclassified as a "least developed" economy, made in March 1987, signalled to the outside world just how far behind the Asian "tigers" Burma had fallen. In fact the application was probably made mainly to achieve the cancellation of a debt to West Germany and easier terms on even larger borrowings from Japan (Guyot 1988, 113). Given its high literacy rates Burma did not strictly qualify for "least developed" status, and the government did not give the decision much publicity at home. After the failure to recognise the 1990 election results, the suppression of the NLD, and the harsh treatment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma has been ostracised by the international development community, and development assistance has been reduced to a trickle.

Indonesia, the Southeast Asian country which Myint singled out, along with Burma, as being "inward looking" in the mid-1960s, began to re-orient its economy after 1966, and achieved both faster economic growth and greater structural transformation than Burma in the last third of the twentieth century. Economic nationalism is hardly extinct in Indonesia, and indeed hostility to foreign control of the economy has become more pronounced in the post-Soeharto period. But few in Indonesia advocate a return to the autarkic economic policies of the early 1960s. Even war-torn Vietnam (not considered by Myint in 1967) has achieved rapid growth over the 1990s after implementing a succession of economic reforms. Indeed the World Bank (2002) reported that the Vietnamese economy grew faster over the 1990s than any other ASEAN economy except Singapore.

Burma, by contrast, has achieved only fitful growth and very little structural transformation, even if the official national income data are taken at face value. While there has undeniably been some improvement in both economic and social indicators since 1950, to many outside observers the pace of change has been far too slow. Even after 1988, when the government did implement at least some reforms designed to "open up" the economy, the results were disappointing. Inward flows of private capital were very small in comparison with most other ASEAN economies (Asian Development Bank 2001, table 39). There has been a large disparity between foreign investment commitments and actual implementation, which according to one report "highlights a very uncertain investment environment, created by inept economic and political management (Burma Economic Watch 2001). And as yet, there is little evidence that the more rapid economic growth has led to any improvement in living standards for the mass of the population.

There can be little doubt that Burma's colonial legacy was an unfavourable one, and that legacy, combined with the destruction wrought during the years from 1942 to 1945, put Burma well behind most of its neighbours when the post-independence race for economic growth and transformation began. Indeed it could be argued that, compared with the Philippines, which started the race with far more advantages, and seemed in the 1950s to be in a much more favourable position to achieve rapid economic growth than most other countries in the region, Burma's achievement has not been too bad. Per capita GDP has increased, and there has been progress in health and education, even if much of it occurred in the first three decades after independence.

Yet far more could have been achieved. Successive governments in Burma have been reluctant either completely to sever economic links with neighbouring economies and the rest of the world, or to pursue the kinds of policies which would maximise the benefits from such links. After independence there was in Burma, as in many other former colonies, a strong conviction that colonial economic policies while promoting exports, failed in utilising the benefits of export growth to improve living standards for the local population. Because there was a large internal market for Burma's main export staples, especially rice, it was understandable that early independence leaders felt strongly that Burmese rice should be channelled to local rather than foreign markets. But over time, such attitudes have hardened into a rigidly inward-looking policy regime, with a powerful set of vested interests determined to preserve it. Although there has been some progress over the 1990s in expanding the role of the private sector, much remains to be done if the Burmese economy is to achieve its full development potential.

Many outside Burma place the blame on the military-led governments which have controlled the country since 1962. Certainly they must shoulder much of the responsibility for the poor economic performance. Yet elsewhere in Asia, military-led governments, displaying scant regard for democratic niceties, have achieved rapid rates of economic growth and structural transformation. The problem in Burma is not the dominance of the military per se, but rather that the military have been either unwilling or unable to share power with other groups, whether technocrats in the civil service or private entrepreneurs, who could place the economy on a secure and sustainable upward path.

Steinberg (2001, 164) has succinctly summarised the most damaging aspects of government policies. He stresses the determination of successive governments to spend on the military rather than on infrastructure, to micro-manage the economy and markets when they obviously lack the capacity to do so, to cut the country off from new technologies, and most serious of all, to encourage the best and the brightest among the younger generation to leave the country. Other regimes in Asia and elsewhere have committed at least some of these policy errors. But few have stubbornly maintained such a disastrous mix of policies over four decades. The reaction of the developed countries has been to curtail all forms of development assistance, and discourage investment by private firms. If by these policies they hope to effect a change in economic policies, or a reduction in the production and export of narcotics, there is little evidence that they have been successful. The real losers from the current stand-off are the Burmese people.

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TABLES

Table 1. Index of Growth of Real GDP Per Capita, 1929-60 (1960 = 100)

Year	Indonesia	Burma	North Vietnam	South Vietnam
1929	115	148 ^a	102	133
1938	115	121	106	146
1951	87	77	97	90
1956	96	96	99	69
1960	100	100	100	100

a 1931/32

Sources: Indonesia: van der Eng (2002, 171-73) ; Burma: Aye Hlaing (1965, 289); Ministry of National Planning (1960); North and South Vietnam; unpublished estimates from Jean Pascal Bassino.

Table 2. Growth in Domestic Product: 1901-2 to 1958/59

Year	Per Capita NDP/GDP Index		<u>As % of NDP/GDP</u>	
	(Kyats) ^a	(1938/39 = 100)	Exports	Taxes
1901/02	55	95	30	13
1906/07	44	76	42	16
1911/12	48	83	41	14
1916/17	65	112	35	11
1921/22	56	97	47	13
1926/27	64	110	36	13
1931/32	71	122	40	23
1936/37	66	114	50	22
1938/39	58	100	48	19
1938/39	302	100	33 ^b	12 ^c
1947/48	194	64	n.a	n.a
1952/53	201	67	30	18
1958/59	241	80	20	19

a Up to 1938/39 the data are in constant prices of 1901/2, and refer to net domestic product (NDP). The last three rows are in constant prices of 1947/48, and refer to gross domestic product (GDP).

b The percentage is lower than the one calculated by Aye Hlaing because his estimate of Net Domestic Product is lower than the GDP estimate given in the post-war national income statistics.

c The percentage is lower than that calculated by Aye Hlaing, partly because his estimate of NDP is lower, but also because the post-war data only include central government revenues.

Sources: 1901/02 to 1938/39: Aye Hlaing (1965, 289); 1938/39 to 1951/52: Ministry of National Planning (1960).

Table 3. Per Capita GDP in Burma and other Asian Countries, 1950-54, 1960-64 and 1985-9 (1985\$: annual averages for the five years shown)

	1950-54	1960-64	1985-89
Burma	245	361	556
India	617	800	1142
China	n.a	487	1282
Laos	n.a	n.a	1316
Philippines	896	1204	1627
Indonesia	n.a	583	1688
Thailand	804	1027	2790
Malaysia	n.a	1544	4082
Taiwan	967	1387	6708
Singapore	n.a	1899	9578

Note: data refer to 1985 dollars, corrected for differences in purchasing power.
Source: Penn World Tables, version 5.6.

Table 4. Budget Revenues and Expenditures as a Percentage of GDP, 1938/39 to 1996/97^a

Year	Total Revenues	Total Expenditures ^b	Defence ^c Expenditures	Health & Education Expenditures
1938/39	11.8	11.7	1.4	1.1
1954/55	19.9	21.0	7.1	2.6
1959/60	20.9	22.1	7.0	3.0
1976/77	12.1	13.6 (56.7)	n.a	n.a
1981/82	16.1	15.9 (66.8)	3.4	2.8
1986/87	12.0	14.7 (50.1)	2.6	2.9
1991/92	9.3	12.0 (36.8)	3.8	2.9
1996/97	7.1	8.8	3.0 ^d	1.6 ^d

a Data refer to five-year averages centered on the years shown except for 1938/39.

b Figures in brackets show consolidated government expenditures, including those of the state economic enterprises.

c Defence expenditures exclude subsidies such as the electricity, rice and fuel subsidies (American Embassy 1996, table K).

d Data refer to 1996/97 only.

Sources: Revolutionary Government of the Union of Burma (1965); Tun Wai (1996), Tables A 28 and A29; International Monetary Fund (1999), (2001).

Table 5. Percentage breakdown of export value by country in ASEAN: 1937-1998

Country	1937	1955	1965	1980	1995	1998
Burma	11.5	6.2	4.7	0.7	0.3	0.3
Indochina	6.5	2.9	3.0	0.5	2.1	3.2
Cambodia				0.0	0.3	0.2
Lao PDR				..	0.1	0.1
Vietnam				0.5	1.7	2.8
Indonesia	33.6	25.6	15.1	30.5	14.2	14.8
British Malaya	34.3	44.9	48.1	51.3	60.6	56.3
Malaysia				18.0	23.0	22.2
Brunei				6.4	0.7	0.8
Singapore				26.9	36.9	33.3
Philippines	9.4	11.3	16.0	8.0	5.4	8.9
Thailand	4.7	9.1	13.1	9.0	17.6	16.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Lewis (1968, table 9). 1980, 1995 and 1998 data from International Monetary Fund (2002, 128-9); data on Brunei from Brunei Darussalam, *Statistical Yearbook*, 1990 and 1998. Data on Vietnam for 1980 from McCarty, Paunlagui and Huy (not dated, 81). Data from Burma in 1937 from Andrus (1948, table 23; in 1955 and 1965 from International Monetary Fund (1971).

Table 6. Exports Per Capita (current US\$) in South East Asia, 1909-13, 1934-38, 1969-73, 1993-97 (annual averages for the five years shown)

	1909-13	1934-38	1969-73	1993-97
Myanmar	10	12	4	24
Indochina	3	4	n.a	80 ^a
Malaysia	88	88	178	3,246
Singapore ^b			1,004	30,256
Indonesia	5	6	10	231
Philippines	5	8	31	248
Thailand	4	6	26	852
Taiwan	6	6	155	4,969

a Data refer to Vietnam only

b In 1909-13 and 1934-38 Singapore is included with Peninsular Malaya under Malaysia.

Sources: 1909-13 and 1934-38: Booth (2000), Table 14.1; 1969-73 and 1993-97: **International Financial Statistics** (Washington: International Monetary Fund, monthly)

Table 7. Sectoral Contributions to Changes in GDP (constant 1985/86 prices)

Sector	% Share of GDP		% Break-down of Increment in GDP by Sector 1988-1999
	1988	1999	
Total GDP	100.0	100.0	100.0
Agriculture	47.9	43.2	37.9
Mining	0.7	2.1	3.7
Manufacturing	8.7	9.4	10.2
Utilities	0.6	1.1	1.6
Construction	1.5	4.6	8.2
Trade	22.4	20.8	19.0
Transport	4.2	6.2	8.5
Finance	3.4	2.1	0.6
Public Admin.	5.9	6.5	7.1
Other	4.7	4.0	3.3

Source: Asian Development Bank (2001), pp. 266-67

Table 8. Agriculture and Manufacturing Industry as a Percentage Share of GDP and the Labour Force: 1938/9 to 1999/200

Year	As Percentage of GDP		As Percentage of the Labour Force ^c	
	Agriculture ^a	Manufacturing ^b	Agriculture	Manufacturing
1938/39	45.8	5.7	69.6 ^d	10.7 ^d
1947/48	48.5	5.4	n.a	n.a
1953/54	44.7	6.3	62.9	9.3
1960/61	40.1	10.5	n.a	n.a
1973/74	40.0	10.4	63.8	10.4
1983/84	49.0	9.6	64.6	9.2
1990/91	47.8	9.1	65.6	7.2
1999/00	43.2	9.4	n.a	n.a

a From 1938/39 to 1960/61 data in constant 1947/48 prices are used; from 1983/84 to 1999/00 data in constant 1985/86 prices are used. The 1973/74 ratio is taken from Nyun (1990, table 8).

b From 1938/39 to 1971/72, the percentage shares are those given in Hill (1984), Tables 2 and 3. From 1983/84 the percentages are estimated from the national income data in constant 1985/86 prices as reported in Asian Development Bank (2001, 266-67).

c The agricultural data are taken from Population Censuses, as reported in Than Nyun (1990, Table 6). The 1990/91 data for the agricultural and manufacturing labour force are from a Labour Force Survey, as reported in Asian Development Bank (2001, 266-67). The estimates of the manufacturing labour force shares for 1973 and 1983 are those estimated from the labour force data in the 1973 and 1983 Population Censuses as reported in Maung (1997), Table 3.15.

d Figures refer to 1931, as reported in the *Census of British India* of that year.

Sources: Ministry of National Planning (1960), Table VII; Government of Burma (1961, table 166); Than Nyun (1990), Tables 6 and 8; Hill (1984); Maung (1997); Asian Development Bank (2001, 266-7).

Table 9. Breakdown of GDP by Final Use, 1938/39 to 1999/00

Year	Consumption	Investment	Exports	Imports	Total
1938/39	70.6	12.2	32.8	-15.6	100.0
1951/52 ^a	76.4	18.2	5.4		100.0
1961/62 ^a	81.6	16.5	1.9		100.0
1973/74	87.2	10.2	6.5	-3.9	100.0
1983/84	85.7	18.0	6.8	-10.4	100.0
1990/91	88.3	13.4	1.9	-3.6	100.0
1999/00	87.0	13.4	0.3	-0.7	100.0

^a Exports for these years refer to exports net of imports.

Source: Ministry of National Planning (1960), Table 1B; Than Nyun (1990); Asian Development Bank (2001)

Table 10. Gross and Net Sown Area per Agricultural Worker, and Cropping Ratios, 1931-1995/96

Year	Cropping Ratio	<u>Hectares per Agricultural Worker</u>	
		Gross Sown Area	Net Sown Area
1931	1.06	1.62	1.54
1971/72	1.15	1.24	1.08
1975/76	1.16	1.19	1.03
1980/81	1.21	1.16	0.96
1985/86	1.24	1.08	0.87
1990/91	1.22	0.98	0.81
1995/96	1.41	1.14	0.81

Sources: Saito and Lee (1999), Tables 1.7 and II.1 and International Monetary Fund (2001), Table 16; 1931 labour force data from Walinsky (1962), Table 1.

Table 11. Percentage Breakdown of the Male Labour Force by Occupational Category, 1931 and 1983^a

Category of Worker	1930		1983
	Total	Indigenous	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Cultivating landowners ^b	31.1	36.3	46.0
Tenants	14.2	16.0	n.a
Agricultural labourers	24.3	26.9	13.3
Other labourers	11.7	6.7	26.3
Other workers	18.7	14.2	14.5

^a 1930 data exclude male working dependents; 1983 data exclude unpaid family workers.

^b 1983 data include employers and own account workers in agriculture.

Sources: Walinsky (1962), Table 2; Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs (1986), pp. 2-133-4

Table 12. Per Capita Rice Availability and Index of Per Capita Consumption Expenditures, 1947/48 to 1971/72

Years	Per capita Rice Availability (Kg. per year)	Index of Real Consumption Expenditures (1938/39=100)
1947/48 to 1951/52	116	84 (1947/48)
1952/53 to 1956/57	108	72 (1954/55)
1957/58 to 1961/62	109	89 (1959/60)
1962/63 to 1966/67	138	94 (1964/65)
1967/68 to 1971/72	153	94 (1969/70)

Sources: Richter (1976), Table 11; Ministry of National Planning (1961), Table 18.

Appendix: Data Sources

Figures 1 and 2 have been produced using several different series on real per capita GDP, reported in Government of Burma (1961), International Monetary Fund (1986), and Asian Development Bank (2001). They must be treated as approximate estimates only. There are numerous problems with the statistical data in Burma which have been widely discussed in the literature (see e.g. Hill and Jayasuriya 1986, 69-70; American Embassy 1996, 7-9; and Turnell 2002). Some are problems common to many developing countries in Asia and elsewhere, but there can be little doubt that government policies such as the extreme over-valuation of the *kyat* and the resulting undervalued and unrecorded trade have aggravated weaknesses in official statistics in Burma. In addition, the suppression of private sector activities after 1962 encouraged black markets which meant that economic activities in sectors such as trade and transport have been consistently under-recorded. Writing in the late 1980s, Guyot (1988, 114) quoted estimates which suggested that the non-opium part of smuggled exports might amount to US\$3.0 billion per annum. Although border trade has been legalised in recent years, and figures on its magnitude are available, the data are still almost certainly underestimated. In addition, according to international conventions, illegal activities such as production and trade in narcotics, are excluded from the national income estimates. Collignon (1997:3) quotes estimates which suggest that the production and trade of narcotics would add 12 to 15 per cent to GDP, although this must be considered a very speculative calculation. Taking all these factors into account, the official estimates of GDP are certainly understated. The growth rates are probably more reliable, but could well be misleading for short periods. For example it is alleged that over the 1990s the GDP deflators systematically under-state price inflation, which means that the growth rates shown in the official data are too high (American Embassy 1996, 8). The problems with the national income data were admitted in a speech in August 2000 by Brigadier General Zaw Tun, Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development (Turnell 2002).

Bronze and Iron Age sites in Upper Myanmar: Chindwin, Samon and Pyu

‘The people moved about in quest of a place, ‘where water is clear and grass tender’

(ရေကြည်ရာ၊ မြက်နုရာ။)¹

ELIZABETH MOORE

Introduction

Since 1998, the Department of Archaeology has excavated seven Bronze and Iron Age cemetery sites in Upper Myanmar by.² (Table 1) At the first three sites listed below, referred to here as the Chindwin group, the principal grave goods were pottery, stone tools, bronze axes and swords, and ceremonial stone rings. Similar artefacts have been recovered during survey at a number of sites in the Lower Chindwin (c. 21.20-22.30n x 94.45-95.30e)(Moore and Pauk Pauk. 2001).

Table 1. Cemetery sites in Upper Myanmar excavated since 1998

<i>Village</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>Latitude x longitude</i>
(1) Nyaunggan	Budalin	Sagaing	22.24n x 95.04e
(2) Monhtoo	Budalin	Sagaing	22.19n x 95.14e
(3) In-de	Taungtha	Mandalay	21.15n x 95.22e
(4) Kok Ko Kha Hla	Wundwin	Mandalay	21.12n x 95.51e
(5) Myin Oo Hle	Mahlaing	Mandalay	21.07n x 95.32e
(6) Hnaw Kan	Mahlaing	Mandalay	21.15n x 95.43e
(7) Ywa Htin Kon	Pyawbwe	Mandalay	20.34n x 95.56e

At the other four excavated sites, the Samon group, the grave goods again included pottery, stone and bronze artefacts. Some pieces, such as stone rings, are comparable to those of the Chindwin, but for the most part are different in form and composition. Bronzes include ‘mother goddess’ figures, *kye doke* (bronze packets), and floral coffin ornaments. Iron and glass artefacts were also recovered. These included weapons such as swords, spearheads and arrowheads and agricultural implements such as socketed hoes. The sites are part of a larger distribution extending south to at least to Pinyinmana in the Samon valley on the east of the central Ayeyarwaddy basin (c.19.40-22.00n x 95.30-96.15e) (Nyunt Han, Win Maung and Moore 2002). There is as yet no distinct site form associated with either group of sites. With the exception of Nyaunggan, located on a crater rim, the Chindwin and Samon sites are located in or near small village mounds.

¹ Hla Thamein 2000:124, Than Tun 1965:8

² In addition to citations, information and help courtesy Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Culture; Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon, and Universities’ Historical Research Centre, Ministry of Education.

A number Pyu walled sites are found in and peripheral to the Samon valley. (Table 2) The Iron Age site of Taungthaman, and Kyaukse, whose ricefields supplied the 9-13C city of Bagan, are located here as well. Halin and Beikthano are on the north and south margins of the Samon bronze-iron distribution. Further south is Sriksetra, by far the largest of the enclosed Pyu sites. Its dating (5-9th C AD) is based on stylistic analysis although its location near the probable ancient shoreline suggests far earlier occupation. Traditional histories indicate habitation of the area long before the founding of the Pyu city (Moore. 2000: 172). Despite clear links to other Pyu sites such as brick walls, finger-marked bricks, and urns, Sriksetra presents a rather different profile in terms of the range of Pyu objects and the paucity of stone or bronze tools. This may well be dispelled with further research and excavation.

Table 2. Pyu or Iron Age sites in the central basin

<i>Pyu or Iron Age site</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>Latitude x longitude</i>		<i>Area enclosed by wall (AungMyint 1998:18)</i>
Halin	Wetlet	Sagaing	22.27n 95.49e	x	208 ha [512 acres]
Taungthaman	Amarapura	Mandalay	21.53n 96.05e	x	
Waddi	Natogyi	Mandalay	21.25n 95.47e	x	130 ha [320 acres]
Maingmaw (Pinle)	Myittha	Mandalay	21.17n 96.12e	x	222 ha [548 acres]
Beinnaka	Pyawbwe	Mandalay	20.36n 96.12e	x	
Beikthano	Taungdwingyi	Magwe	20.00n 92.23e	x	291.7 ha [717 acres]
Sriksetra	Pyay	Bago	18.48n 95.17e	x	1477ha [c.30 sq.km]

Brick walls enclose most Pyu sites giving them a characteristic form. Aung Myint has classified Beikthano, Halin and Taungdwingyi [20.00n x 95.32] as quadrangular and Sriksetra, Maingmaw, Waddi, Thegon [18.32n x 95.20] and Pinle [21.17n x 96.10e] as rounded (1998). At Beikthano and Halin, and the interior quadrangle at Maingmaw, the walls are inclined 13-18 degrees west of magnetic north, a deviation which has been cited to date their construction to the 2nd to the 1st century BC (Than Tun 1996a: 5, 1979:55).

At Beinnaka and at Halin, both Samon bronze-iron as well as Pyu artefacts have been recovered. Quadrangular walls are visible at Beinnaka and although perhaps Pyu, villagers attribute these to the Shan, suggesting that they date to the 9-13C AD Bagan period. The site is one of a row of mounds forming a north to south alignment. One of these, Padi Kon ('bead mound') was excavated by U Sein Maung Oo, Department of Archaeology in 1985. Skeletons unearthed under the northwest corner of the Beinnaka wall in 1982 were accompanied by lead rolls with writing, which are generally assigned to the Pyu period. In 1998, two further skeletons were found on the east of the wall, along with bronze spears, *kye doke* and stone ceremonial rings.³

³ Field survey 1998-9 carried out with U Win Maung (Tampawaddy), courtesy help from Pyawbwe SPDC Township Head and Ministry of Defence.

A similar pattern of finds is seen at Halin. The lowest portion of the site, marked by thermal springs and streams, is on the southeast. (Figure 1) It is in this area that most Chindwin and Samon-type artefacts have been recovered, especially from villages just southeast of the city wall. These include a number of bronze axes and highly polished stone rings typical of Chindwin sites. Also found are blue glass rings, bronze *kye doke* and floral 'coffin' ornaments characteristic of the Samon region. From the same area at Halin, Pyu beads, including carnelian 'tiger' beads, painted pottery, and broad petal-shaped iron swords set in finely decorated bronze hilts have also been found (Win Maung 2002, 2003).

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Figure 1. Pyu walled enclosure: Halin, Wetlet Township



Halin northern elevated landscape and wall (top),
Stream and thermal springs southeast of village (bottom);
Photos by author 1998

Chronology and terms

The Bronze Age cemetery of Nyaunggan in the Chindwin has been dated through comparison to bronze artefacts from other areas in the region to c. 1500-1000 BC, the time period given for the establishment of a bronze-working tradition in Southeast Asia.⁴ However, the start of bronze production in this area and the duration of cemetery use are not yet known. Absolute dating is underway but not yet available for the excavated

⁴ Attempts to date bone from both Hnaw Kan and Nyaunggan failed to give results due to lack of collagen in the samples. Charcoal was recovered Hnaw Kan, but the results are not available at the time of this writing (Patreau et al. 2001: 100; Patreau 2002).

cemetery sites in the Samon, and again an initial date for bronze and iron working there has not been formulated. From c. 700-400BC, fairly rapid change probably took place in Southeast Asia, a shift from unstratified agriculturalist economies using stone tools, to ranked metal-using communities (Glover 1999b: 104). The inception of localised iron production in the region is generally placed around 500 BC (Glover 1999a: 87, Higham 2002: 158, 166). Thermo-luminescence dates were obtained from both pottery and iron excavated at Taungthaman, the latter yielding a date of 460 $\pm$ 200 BC. The iron date was from a fishhook found on the chest of a skeleton, one of forty-four inhumation burial excavated by U Sein Maung Oo in 1982 (Stargardt 1990: 15-6,29).

The Pyu sites have been dated to about 200 BC – 900 AD, with charcoal samples from Beikthano yielding the earliest dates (Aung Thaw 1968, Aung Thwin 1982-3). The sequence of 1000+ years bracketed as 'Pyu' rests on more information than thus far is available for the Chindwin and Samon sites. Radiocarbon dates are available from Beikthano and Halin, there is palaeographic analysis of a limited number of inscriptions on stone and on gold plates, and stylistic analysis of bricks, beads, pottery, sculpture, monuments and walls. However, many aspects of related to the Pyu remain uncertain. These include deciphering the language and, as discussed below, determining whether the Pyu were a distinct ethnic group that entered the central basin or were one of a number of groups already present. Dating the different elements of Pyu sites, from walls to structures merits further research as well. Also important is a clearer picture of developments during the early centuries AD. This was a period of expanding trade with both northern and southern parts South Asia and China, and there are indications that the changes indicated at sites such as Chansen in Central Thailand during the third century AD (Bronson 1976), were mirrored at Pyu settlements.

Covering c.1500 BC – 1000 AD, this chronology spans the pre- to proto-historic, and thus embraces the period recorded in Myanmar's chronicle tradition. The hypotheses presented here attempt to integrate 'Pyu' within a fresh framework, juxtaposing this long-used ethnic label to 'Chindwin' and 'Samon' also in order to recall the way that conceptions of the past are involved in the current production of knowledge. "In this sense, the past is real and not dead and gone: through archaeological and historical production it is an active part of the present." (Shanks and Tilley 1987:114-5).

The past is also part of the chronological present as most prehistoric sites in Upper Myanmar continue to be occupied today. Nonetheless, many tend to yield artefacts associated with one 'culture' and consequently come to be identified with a single chronological period.⁵ There are numerous exceptions, prompting caution when assigning or assessing 'terminal' dates. For instance, among the surface finds at Nyaunggan were lead rolls similar to ones from the Pyu site of Maingmaw. Also at Nyaunggan, 18-19th C Konbaung pottery was found at a walled structure near the earlier cemetery (Moore and Pauk Pauk 2001:38). As mentioned above, at Halin and Beinnaka, a range of bronze, bronze-iron, Pyu, Bagan and later artefacts have been recovered (Win Maung 2001, 2002, 2003). As implied by these notes, in describing Chindwin, Samon and Pyu assemblages the intent is not to delimit periods or spheres of social activity but rather to investigate continuities and interaction. Occupation levels at sites and within regions certainly fluctuated over time, but both areas were continuously inhabited.

⁵ U Hla Tun Pyu, Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon, discussion 2003.

Chindwin grave goods

Finds in this area are generally typed in comparison to artefacts from the 1998-9 Nyaunggan cemetery excavations (Yee Yee Aung 2001, 2002; Nyunt Han 1999). During the two field seasons, five pits were excavated. Forty-four burial features were identified, most extended and supine primary burials, located between 10cm to 1.5m below the surface. One secondary burial was found, a skull in a large pot. It is also possible, based on burials in Thailand, that infants were contained in a number of the large jars that were excavated (Figure 2) (Tayles, Domett and Pauk Pauk 2001). The Nyaunggan grave goods are principally pottery, bronze axes and spears, and stone tools and rings. The burials show a degree of social hierarchy, with bronze tools and weapons as well as stone rings being excavated in a limited number of inhumations. A ceremonial use for the stone rings is suggested by the different shapes (square, egg-shaped, triangular, round or pinion), the smallness of the central hole (averaging 5cm) and their placement on various parts of the body.

Figure 2. Nyaunggan cemetery, Budalin Township



Secondary burial with skull (above) and burial with large pots (right) Nyaunggan.



Photographs courtesy of Ministries of Defence and Culture.

Ceremonial rings found in the Samon are made of either stone or glass, the latter ranging in colour from blue to green. The shape is often round, but rings that are ovoid or round with points have also been recovered. Stone rings have been found at a number of sites in Thailand, many being more similar to those from the Samon rather than the Chindwin. One example is stone rings from Kok Pleb, Bang Phae, Ratchaburi Province in central west Thailand. Rings excavated at this site included not only ones made of stone but shell, bone, and bronze 'bracelets' as well as stone ear pendants (Daeng-iet 1978).

•



industry	metal and/or plastic	size	600mm
surface	matte	color	blue
reference		location	London, U.K.

Drawing by U Win Maung (Tampawaddy)



ddy) Photo courtesy Ministries of Defence and Culture

To date, the bronze female figures have been found at only some Samon sites such as Myin Oo Hle, Kok Ko Kha Hla and Nyaunggan (20.46n x 96.06e), and not at Halin. In contrast, the *kye doke* and floral ornaments are found at virtually all sites in this area, and at Halin. The *kye doke* are packets of thin bronze wire 'tied' into bundles with an outer wire. (Figure 4) It has been suggested that they were indicators of age, or needles (Patreau et al. 2001:100), but they also resemble bundles of padi and may have been markers of wealth. The floral ornaments are flat curvilinear v-shaped strips, often framed and with holes on the ends or corners to fix to coffins.

Figure 4. Samon bronzes: *Kye Doke* & triple 'Mother goddess' figure

Although some of the bronze ritual goods such as 'mother goddesses' may have been gilded, the principal metals recovered from Samon sites are bronze and iron. Iron is found not only in the form of bi-metallic swords but used to produce socketed hoes, spearheads and arrowheads (Win Maung 2002). However, iron architectural fittings such as hinges and door sockets found at Pyu sites were not reported at either Hnaw Kan or Taungthaman. At Hnaw Kan, eighty-four burials were unearthed from twenty graves. Bronze was only seen in *kye doke*, with iron tools including socketed axes and spearheads, sword and daggers (Patreau et al. 2002).

In general, bronze working became more elaborated at sites in the Samon. Although the Chindwin area was rich in copper, the Samon offered access to the tin and silver resources of the Shan Plateau. No stone moulds have yet been recovered from the Chindwin, but in the Samon, a number have been found, for example at Kok Ko Kha Hla. Bronze sword hilts and hollow bracelets from Samon sites also indicate casting while thin ceremonial swords, 'mother goddess' figures, and floral ornaments appear to have been hammered. While both Chindwin and Samon sites have bronze tools, the rounded axes of the Chindwin differ from the longer, more rectangular axes of the Samon. The composition of bronze implements also appears to vary. For instance, analysis of a bronze axe from Salingyi (21.58n x 95.05e), south of Monywa, gave a result of 99.5 percent copper content¹, whereas the friability of the *kye doke* and 'mother goddess' figures of the Samon may indicate a higher tin content.

While artefacts from sites such as Halin and Beinnaka span several cultural periods, the relationship of these to the spatial extent of the 'site' is not yet clear. In-de, for example, is some 20 kilometres west of Myin Oo Hle. Both associated villages are located on streams draining into the Ayeyarwaddy, just below its confluence with the Chindwin. Excavations at both cemetery sites yielded ceremonial stone rings. However, the In-de bronzes resembled those from Nyaunggan while the Myin Oo Hle burials contain *kye doke*, 'mother goddess' figures and floral coffin ornaments. These artefacts

¹ Test carried out for author courtesy Nara Cultural Properties Research Institute, 1998.

give some idea of burial practices, but habitation evidence would begin to set these in a wider perspective.

Pyu Artefacts

The Pyu 'period' brought major transitions to ritual as Hindu and Buddhist practice was integrated into an increasingly hierarchical society. Although bronze and iron metallurgy and the firing of clay for pots and beads was already well established, this technology was used in new ways to manufacture goods, define territory, erect ritual structures, and to honour the dead. There remain varied opinions on the manner in which South Asian technical influence and ritual change were incorporated, however. Where most authors suggest that both were corollaries to increased urbanism (e.g. Wheatley 1971: 249), others, posit that techniques preceded concept, with for example pre-Buddhist funeral buildings constructed at Pyu sites using locally manufactured bricks (Stargardt: 1990, 1994).

Stone and metal

Skilled stone carving is seen in semi-precious stone beads common to both the Samon and Pyu, but the finely carved ceremonial rings of the Samon are not part of the Pyu assemblage. Three-dimensional stone sculptural pieces are relatively rare, and tend to be large relief carvings on stone slabs rather than freestanding. These have prompted suggestions of megalithic practice, a possibility furthered by the presence of megaliths at Moegyobyin, Salingyi in the Chindwin, and Kok Ko Kha Hla in the Samon.²

Although the Samon metallurgical tradition was well developed, increasing technical skill was likely to have been one catalyst in the Pyu use of bronze to make figural images. Pyu metal goods ranged from bronze bells, to cubical gold beads, and silver 'coins'. The ninth century Man Shu notes that in the P'iao [Pyu] kingdom a silver coinage is used (Luce 1961:90). Whether coinage or bullion, these distinctive silver discs are recovered from all Pyu sites. A Pyu or Mon origin is attributed to certain types of coins, in some cases based on distribution of finds such as the rising sun motif, and in others such as the Srivatsa design, its presence on stamped pottery as well as silver coins from Beikthano (Wicks 1992: 118, Bronson 1969:142). It is possible that the metal working skill of Samon cultures was expanded by the Pyu to include work in silver. Indeed, the technology to smelt silver from a lead-zinc ore seems to have been particularly well developed by the Pyu, perhaps given their proximity to major deposits (Bronson 1992:82-3).

Brick walls and gates

The massive brick walls of Pyu cities enclose apparently royal, sacred and agricultural areas. Walls were built of large bricks (up to 50cm long), and were often 2-5m wide and with sections of wall at Sriksetra being some 30m broad at the base. Remains today are some 6-15 ft (1.8- 4.5m) in height, although erosion and use of bricks for roads and railways has reduced this in many cases. (Figures 1, 5) Knowledge of local topography was incorporated into the plan of the enclosure, often related to natural hydrological features. For instance, given the presence of natural water sources, manmade moats

² Excavations at Kok Ko Kha Hla carried out by U Hla Gyi Maung Maung, Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Culture; Daw Yee Yee Aung, Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon, discussion 2003

apparently were not constructed on the lowest land on the south of Halin. (Figure 1) Likewise, no wall is visible on the west of Beikthano where lakes are found on the lower terrain.

Curved gates break the walls at all Pyu sites, often with sizeable openings once fortified with wooden gates and iron fittings. At Beikthano, the arms of one gateway extend some 86 ft (25.8m) into the enclosure (Aung Thaw 1972:3). The cities are thought to have had twelve gates, giving them a cosmological significance repeated at later capitals such as Mandalay (Moore 1993: 338). The number of gates is mentioned in Chinese records, although only two have yet been excavated at Beikthano, three at Halin (Luce 1961: 90, Aung Thaw 1972:12). Bricks were used extensively not only to demarcate the domain but sacred areas within and along its walls. Thus brick funerary halls, stupas, and temples, are found, although particularly at Sriksetra, some of these structures may have been built during the Bagan period (Stadtner 1986, 1998).

Urns

A range of ritual purposes, from royal inhumation, to memorial groupings and apotropaic protection of domain is suggested not only by the various materials from which Pyu urns were made, but the range of places where they were interred. Pyu urns were made of terracotta, copper, bronze or stone, with the majority being terracotta. (Figures 5a & 5b) Some may have been purpose made, but many different shaped vessels were used. At Halin, the lid of a terracotta urn been likened to the structure of pagodas thought to have evolved only in the late 11th C AD (Than Tun 1972:209, Myint Aung 1970; fig.5). The urns suggest various functions, and also provide a useful general index of burial custom, burials providing the provenance of most of the material from bronze and bronze-iron sites in the Chindwin and Samon.

Figure 5a: Pyu urn



Urns at KKG-12, Beikthano
Photograph from Aung Thaw Excavation Report, 1968

Figure 5b: Pyu wall



Maingmaw outer walls (c. 3.5m in places).
Photograph Courtesy of U Aung Myint, 1988

Within Pyu city walls, urns have been recovered on the interior and exterior of halls and stupa-like structures. Most of these buildings have semi-circular and mango sprout bricks on the stairways and exterior walls. Sometimes one or two skeletons or a pile of bones marked the cluster of urns. Some forty terracotta urns were excavated from a large hall (KKG9) south of the citadel-palace at Beikthano. This building and a similar one (KKG11) just inside the north wall gate (KKG13) have been described as a memorial structures (San Shwe 2002:16). The cremated remains of venerated persons are thought to have been gathered until burial could be carried out. Similar customs of burial deferral have been recorded in the last century among various groups in Southeast Asia. For instance, amongst the Chin, a corpse was first kept for one or two years until a feast could be held, and then laid in an open coffin raised above the ground until only bones remained. These were then gathered and placed in an earthen pot (Carey and Tuck 1896:193).

Veneration of the deceased may have also included burial of funeral ashes and bones in the foundation wall of structures where the owners died. At Beikthano, instances cited include a monastic building (KKG2) and a cluster of three rectangular buildings to the north of this (BTO 8,9,10). In addition to urns, iron nails, shallow clay oil lamps and children's toys were found (San Shwe 2002:11,12). This cluster (BTO 8,9,10) was excavated between 1996-9, categorized with an earlier group (KKG 11,12,14), excavated in the 1960's. The earlier excavated group includes a memorial hall (KKG11), a square temple with a rectangular projection (KKG12), and a stupa-style monument on a square base (KKG14). This last type of building has often been likened to domed structures at Nagarjunakonda. In connection with the practice of urn burial in monasteries, Aung Thaw cites instances at Nagarjunakonda where remains of monks or priests were enshrined in terracotta water pots within monastic stupas (1968:65).

Urn were also placed in the city gate areas. At Halin, urns and skeletons were found in the lowest stratum under the road of the south gate (HL10), while six skeletons were found in the fourth layer under the southeast gate (HL17). Five of the six skeletons

faced west, with the remaining one laid with the head to the east. Bronze blades were recovered from the bend in the arm, one piece having fragments of cloth attached to it (Than Tun 1996b: 5). Mounds with urns are found outside city walls at most of the Pyu sites. At Beikthano, Aung Thaw cites “countless low mounds which are urn graves” (1968:2). In this context he notes the long tradition of the highly venerated Shweyaungdaw pagoda, some 400 yards east to the northeast corner of the city wall. The zeidi is located on the highest part of the terrain, with water flowing from this part through the site to the southwest. Stargardt links this to ancestral practice, suggesting that at both Beikthano and Sriksetra that water was channelled through the burials on elevated areas before circulating via canals within the city walls (1994:67). The Sriksetra urns, like those at Beikthano, are located on elevated areas, and have been found together with iron artefacts. Located southwest of the wall, these were unearthed in rows layered on brick terraces. Remains of a possible wooden structure were reported on the mound. Some 1000 terracotta urns were removed, with a further 1000 left undisturbed. The associated iron objects included iron nails, pins and a spiked plate with forty-three nails ranging from 7-11 1/2” (17.5-29cm) (Duroiselle 1926:83). The iron finds at Halin do not include similar plates, although a large number of spiked caltrops were recovered outside the city gates (Aung Thaw 1972:14).

Transitions in material culture and domain

As described in the paragraphs above, an abundance of burial urns links all Pyu sites, their ubiquity highlighting questions about the interface between this and other burial customs. For instance, large pots excavated at Nyaunggan indicate that secondary burial may have been practiced, although full analysis of the excavated pottery has yet to be undertaken. Thus far, there is no evidence at Chindwin or Samon sites for cremation and use of urns for ashes analogous to the Pyu. Nor is the manner in which domain was demarcated at these sites yet known. It is unclear, for example, if the skeletons with *kye doke* and bronze tools recovered under the wall at Beinnaka mentioned earlier in this paper are chance finds or whether their placement was known and is associated with later building of the wall.

Urnns are not typical of the Bagan period, despite the city’s traditional Pyu origins and the possible continuance there of apotropaic inhumation. The range of burial customs described above indicates that a combination of Hindu and Buddhist practice, ancestral veneration, and animist ritual was observed during the Pyu period. However, although Pyu urns and inhumations are associated with Hindu-Buddhist structures, there is a scarcity of figural sculpture found in and around these. The absence is striking, given the numerous buildings with obvious South Asian links. Most scholars explain this rarity of figural images in one of three ways: aniconic practice such as the Apraseliya or Mahisasaka sects of South India, an abrupt end to occupation of sites with sculpture destroyed or taken to another city such as from Beikthano to Sriksetra, or pillaging by treasure hunters over the centuries.

The sculpture that has been recorded is varied in material and iconography, much of it stemming from Hindu-Buddhist practice. For instance, the feet of two massive standing *dvarapala* figures carved in stone were found at the eastern gate of the Beikthano palace wall, but Buddhist and Hindu sculpture was not found during excavation (Aung Thaw 1972:5). An image thought to be a *kinnari* was excavated from Beikthano and mythical creatures such as *naga* and *makara* are represented in Pyu art (Aung Thaw 1968:51 & Pl. LV). However, with the exception of the *kinnari*, none of these are anthropomorphised and none appear to have been venerated as deities as was sometimes the case in South Asia (Shaw and Sutcliffe 2002). At present, the greatest number of figural pieces are have been recovered from Sriksetra. The dating of these

goes back to about the late 5th century AD in contrast to radiocarbon dates for Beikthano of the second century BC. Bronzes from Sriksetra suggest both Theravada and Mahayana practice, possibly following or contemporaneous with Hindu sects. At Halin, sculpture is also scarce although the few finds present a well-developed carving tradition. One piece is the lower section of sandstone stele, over a metre in height, found southeast of the city wall at Halin. This depicts the feet of a seated figure variously identified as Mettaya, the future Buddha, or a Bodhisattva, below which are figures of fifty-three devotees with hands held in veneration. Like the royal stone urns from Sriksetra, this stele has been cited as indication of an earlier megalithic tradition (Guy 1999:19).

The contrast between the technical and ritual sophistication suggested by these varied depictions, and the scarcity of provenanced Pyu pieces suggest that there is much more research to be carried out. Turning to the Samon finds, the same is indicated by the recent finds of the anthropomorphic 'mother goddess' figures, *kye doke* and other finds. All testify to specialised manufacturing skills and a complex ritual context. These figures are thought to have been fixed to the top of wooden coffins along with floral ornaments and small conical pieces. Perhaps reminiscent of the paucity of Pyu sculpture, there is no hint in earlier literature of their existence or associated objects such as the *kye doke*, with the first example from Myin Oo Hle, being unearthed in 1998 (Win Maung 1998). A number of the 'mother goddesses' have now been found, and like the uniquely elaborated Pyu burial customs, parallels elsewhere are not yet apparent. There are certainly depictions of human figures in assemblages of the Pyu or earlier periods, some of which were noted above and further below. However, apart from possibly the cave paintings, none have been identified as fertility figures, ancestral memorials or as spirit (*nat*) images. Even when, *nat* images are mentioned in traditional accounts, these are in the context of nature spirits, untimely deaths, or tutelary figures. In such cases, female fertility may be a clear theme in the story or depiction, but at least in its form, the 'mother goddess' rendition bears little resemblance these.

Aung Thaw identified figures of human hands and skulls amongst the cave paintings at Badah-lin, where radiocarbon dates from charcoal and bone collagen yielded dates of around 7-13,000 years before present (1969:15 Aung Thwin 2001:26). Virtually all other figures fit within a Hindu-Buddhist or court context. Stamped sherds from Beikthano included the figure of a man, seated in one case and standing or dancing in another. Although the depiction is stylised and dress is not apparent, the seated figure is under an umbrella (Aung Thaw 1968:Fig.71). Terracotta plaques from KhinBaGôn and Kimmunchôn at Sriksetra and from Maingmaw show various figures, mostly guardians and *rishi*. In a few instances the large plaques bear the figure of a man on a horse, identified by Luce as one of the four celestial horses of Vishnu (1985: 143, Pls.40,41). Stone depictions from Sriksetra include a female deity, possibly Mahayanist and a *dvarapala*. Five bronze figures of musicians and dancers are thought to resemble a troupe sent by the court to the Chinese capital in 802AD (Aung Thaw 1972).

According to traditional accounts, neither Pyu nature spirits nor ancestral figures were represented in human form. It has been suggested that it was only with the absorption of Pyu Tagaung by the consolidation of the Bamar at Bagan, that venerated but not represented natural elements were transformed into fully recognised tutelary spirits (Brac de la Perriere 2002:100). Amongst the Pyu and at bronze working sites of the Chindwin and Samon, anthropomorphic wooden images may have existed. Evidence for such images has not survived, although ancestral or memorial figures are well recorded more recently such as amongst the Chin (Carey and Tuck 1896: Pl.16). Thus in the context of prehistoric practices, the Samon 'mother goddess' bronzes may represent a different strand of anthropomorphism, and when fully understood may prompt revision of the circumstances within which Pyu images were produced

The catalyst for change in materials if not concepts may have come from a new population group, as has long been suggested in relation to the Pyu (Luce 1974). Alternatively, this may have been one result of norms and technology acquired by sectors of an existing population through maritime and overland trade. The clustering of sites around Beinnaka has prompted suggestions that it might be a Pyu 'homeland' pre-dating walled Pyu settlements (Hudson 2001:7). With increasing Pyu social complexity and related territorial dominance, however, there appears to have been a gradual disappearance of the overt animistic-ancestral practices in the Samon, possibly in the early centuries AD. By the mid-ninth century AD, the Pyu (and Mon) began to be absorbed into Bamar ritual and kingship at Bagan. The absence of a major fortified site may have facilitated consolidation of existing settlements including the traditional 'nineteen Pyu villages'. At a royal rather than chiefdom urban scale, Bagan becomes naturally defensible, a potential not offered by the position of Pyu cities. A number of Pyu features, ranging from outer walls and urn burials to silver coins, are absent at Bagan. Other customs are retained but change in form. For example, bricks stamped with village names replace the finger-marked bricks of the Pyu (Moore and Aung Myint: 1991). As with the apparent transition from the Samon to the Pyu, the Pyu-Bagan interface may reflect not the influx of intrusive groups, but a "fresh merger of existing tribes" (Maung Htin Aung. 1970:11). In both cases, more research may bring very different scenarios from to that are now formulated and at the same time find commonalities with earlier historiography.

Conclusion

Chindwin and Samon sites, as understood to date and described here, were village-based bronze-using societies. Both groups engaged in animistic ritual practice, making use of ceremonial rings. Around Monywa, at Chindwin villages, these were made of stone. To the east, south of Mandalay, the rings were made from stone and also glass. In addition, these Samon inhabitants produced a range of distinct grave goods, notably bronze packets (*kye doke*), floral ornaments and 'mother goddess' figures. Bronze was also used to cast hilts for iron swords, although production sites for these goods have not yet been excavated. Similarly, the nature of agricultural intensification generally linked to localised iron production is not yet clear. The mortuary finds of the Samon suggest a stratified rice-producing society, one where rice was used as a ceramic temper. In contrast, the Chindwin bronze sites are not clearly associated with intensive paddy production, and in pottery examined to date, sand not rice chaff was used as a temper. Wet rice cultivation already underway at Samon village sites may have been augmented by the Pyu grouped around walled sites in the Samon valley and on its fringes. Another aspect of accelerating land alteration was related to control of water resources. Remains of this are detectable at a number of Pyu sites, to the extent that existing canals and moats can be attributed to this period.

For the three groups of sites described here as Chindwin, Samon, and Pyu, the extent of agricultural and cultural spheres is distinct at some junctures and amorphous at others. Within these variable domains, links to place provided focal points for human activity and instigation of change. A representative classification of these bronze and iron cultures should harmonise this constancy of the land with an inherently changing environment. Such a typology does not exclude a temporal sequence but the purpose of the process is to interpret the reasons and circumstances that prompted events rather than solely marking out the passage of time. Analogously, the present understanding of that past exists only in the context previous interpretations. In both instances, the exercise is ongoing, always in need of adjustment of ideas, concepts and representations.

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Early Article Reprint 1

Francis Buchanan published his “A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burma Empire” in 1799, in the fifth volume of *Asiatic Researches*. This piece provides one of the first major Western surveys of the languages of Burma. But the article goes beyond this and provides important data on the ethno-cultural identities and identifications of the various population groups in the first half of Bò-daw-hpayà’s reign (1782-1819). For these reasons, the article is republished here.

The article is reproduced in its entirety, with slight modifications as follows. The letter “j” used for the contemporary “s” in such words as “Chinej[e]” follows contemporary usage (thus, “Chinese”). At several points in the article, the original publisher did not include all the necessary characters (and sometimes lopped off the ends of sentences). In such cases, the lost letter or likely word has been included within brackets. Split words, using a dash at the end of a sentence have been reunified (hence, “wo-man”, is now “woman”). Finally, the article has been repaginated to fit within the overall scheme of this issue of the SBBR. Beyond these points, no changes have been made and all footnotes are derived from the original article.

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M. W. C.

A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burma Empire

Francis Buchanan, M. D.

TO judge from external appearance, that is to say, from shape, size, and feature, there is one very extensive nation that inhabits the east of *Asia*. It includes the Eastern and Western *Tartars* of the *Chinese* authors, the *Calmuks* the *Chinese*, the Japponese, the *Malays* and other tribes inhabiting what is called the Peninsula of *India* beyond the *Ganges*: and the islands to the south and east of this, as far at least as *New Guinea*. This, however, is speaking in a very general sense, and many foreign races being intermixed with the nation, and, perhaps, many tribes belonging to it, being featured beyond the limits I have mentioned.

This nation may be distinguished by a short, squat, robust, fleshy stature, and by features highly different from those of an *European*. The face is somewhat in shape of a lozenge, the forehead and chin being sharpened, whilst at the cheek-bones it is very broad : unless this be what is meant by the conical head of the *Chinese*, I confess myself at a loss to understand what that is. The eyebrows, or supercillary ridges, in this nation, project very little ; and the eyes are very narrow, and placed rather obliquely in the head, the external angles being the highest. The nose is very small, but has not, like that of the Negro, the appearance of having flattened, and the apertures of the nostrils, which in the *European* are linear and parallel, in them are nearly circular and divergent ; for the *septum narium* being much thickest towards the face, places them entirely out of the parallel line. The mouths of this nation are in general well shaped ; their hair is harsh, lank, and black. Those of them that live in the warmest climates, do not obtain the deep hue of the negro or *Hindu* ; nor do such of them as live in the coldest countries, acquire the clear bloom of the *European*.

In adventitious circumstances, such as laws, customs, government, political maxims, religion, literature, there is also a strong resemblance among the different states composing this great nation ; no doubt arising from the frequent intercourse that has been among them.

But it is very surprising, that a wonderful difference of language should prevail. Language, of all adventitious circumstances, is the surest guide in tracing the migrations and connections of nations ; and how in a nation, which bears such strong marks of being one, radically the same, languages, totally different should prevail, I cannot, at present, pretend to conjecture ; but, in order to assist, in accounting for the circumstance, having, during my stay in the *Burma* Empire, been at some pains to collect a comparative vocabulary of such of the languages spoken in it as opportunity offered, I have thought it might be curious to publish it. I am sensible of its many imperfections : but it is a beginning, which I hope hereafter to make more complete ; and where I fail, others, without doubt, will be more successful.

In all attempts to trace the migrations and connections of tribes by means of language, it ought to be carefully remembered, that a few coincidences, obtained by searching through the whole extent of two dictionaries, it is by no means the least affinity ; for our organs being only capable of pronouncing a certain, and that very limited, number of sounds, it is to be expected, according to the common course of chance, that two nations, in a few instances, will apply the same sound to express the same idea. It ought also to be observed that, in tracing the radical affinities of languages, terms of art, men's names, religious and law phrases, are, of all words, the most improper ; as they are liable constantly to be communicated by adventitious circumstances from one race of men to another. What connection of blood have we, *Europeans*, with the *Jews*, from whom a very great proportion of our names and religious terms are derived? Or what connection have the natives of *Bengal* with the *Arabs* or *English*, from whom they have derived most of their law and political terms? With the former they have not even had political connection, as the phrases in question were derived to them through the medium of the *Persians* and *Tartars*. Two languages, therefore, ought only to be considered radically the same, when, of a certain number of common chosen by accident, the greater number have a clear and distinct resemblance : a circumstance, to which, if antiquarians had been attentive, they would have been saved from the greater part of that etymological folly, which has so often exposed their pleasing science to the just ridicule of mankind.

In the orthography I have had much difficulty. Two people seldom write in the same way, any word or language with which they are unacquainted. I have attempted merely to convey to the *English* reader, without any minute attention to accent, or small variations of vowels, a sound similar to that pronounced; nor have I paid any attention to the orthography of the natives. This, in the *Burma* language, I might have done ; but as I am not acquainted with the writing of the other tribes, I thought it the safest method to express the sound merely. The following scheme of vowels, in order to read my vocabulary correctly, must be kept in mind.

A—pronounce as in the *English* words *bad, bat, had, hat*.

Aw—or broad *Scotch* a, as in *bawd*.

Ay—as the *English* a in *babe, bake, bare ; day, pay, hay*.

Ee—in order to avoid confusion, I use for the *English* e, as they have exactly the same sound.

Æ—I use for the *French* and *Scotch* e open.

U—I always sound as in the word *duck* ; using oo for its other sound, as in *book*.

Ou—I sound as in *sound, bound*.

Au—is nearly similar, but broader, a sound scarcely to be met with in the *English* language.

Ei—I use as the vowel in *bind, find, &c*.

Ai—nearly the same, but broader.

} These two sounds, as far as I remember,
are not used by the English.

Oe—I use to express the *French* u.

It is to be observed, that the pronunciation, among all these tribes, to a stranger appears exceedingly inarticulate. In particular they hardly ever pronounce the letter R ; and T, D, Th, S, and Z, are almost used indiscriminately. The same may be said of P and B. Thus the word for water, which the *Burmas* universally pronounce *yoe*, is written *rae* ; and the *Pali* name for their capital city, *Amarapoora*, is commonly pronounced *Amaapooya*. This indistinct pronunciation probably arises from the excessive quantity of betel which they chew. No man of rank ever speaks without his mouth being as full as possible of a mixture of betel and nut, tobacco, quicklime, and spices. In this state he is nearly deprived of the use of his tongue in articulation, which, although not the only organ of speech, is yet of such use in articulation, as to be commonly considered as such. Hence it is, that an indistinct articulation has become fashionable, even when the tongue is at liberty.

I shall begin with the *Burma* language as being at present the most prevalent. There are four dialects of it, that of *Burma* Proper, that of *Arakan*, that of the *Yo*, and that of *Tenasserim*.

The people called by us *Burmas*, *Barmas*, *Vermas*, *Brimmas*, &c. stile themselves *Myammaw*. By people of *Pegu*, they are named *Pummay* ; by *Karaya*, *Yoo* ; by the people of *Cussay*, *Awa*, by the *Cussay Shau*, *Kammau* ; by the *Chinese* of *Younan*, *Laumeen* ; and by the *Aykobat*, *Anwa*. They esteem themselves to be descended from the people of *Arakan*, whom they often call *Myanmmaw gyee* ; that is to say, great *Burmas*.

The proper natives of *Arakan* call themselves *Yakain*, which name is also commonly given to them by the *Burmas*. By the people of *Pegu*, they are named *Takain*. By the *Bengal Hindus*, at least by such of them as have been settled in *Arakan*, the country is called *Rossaum*, from whence, I suppose, Mr. Rennell has been induced to make a country named *Roshaum* occupy part of his map, not conceiving that it would be *Arakan*, or the kingdom of the *Mugs*, as we often call it. Whence this name of *Mug*, given by the *Europeans* to the natives of *Arakan*, has been derived, I know not ; but, as far as I could learn, it is totally unknown to the natives and their neighbours, except such of them as, by their intercourse with us, have learned its use. The *Mahommedans* settled at *Arakan*, call the country *Rovingaw*, the *Persians* call it *Rekan*.

The third dialect of the *Burma* language is spoken by a small tribe called *Yo*. There are four governments of this nation, situated on the east side of the *Arakan* mountains, governed by chiefs of their own, but tributary to the *Burmas*.

The fourth dialect is that of what we call the coast of *Tenasserim*, from its city now in ruins, whose proper name was *Tanayntharee*. These people, commonly called by the *Burmas*, *Dawayza* and *Byeitza*, from the two governments of which their country consists, have most frequently been subjected to *Siam* [and] *Pegu* ; but at present they are subjects of the *Burma* [kingdom].

Although the dialects of these people, to one another, appear very distinct, yet the difference consists chiefly in such minute variations of accent as not to be observable by a stranger. In the same manner as an *Englishman*, at first, is seldom able to distinguish even the *Aberdeen* accent from that of the other shires of Scotland, which to a Scotchman appears to be different ; so, in most cases, I could perceive no difference in the words of these four languages, although among the *Burmas*, any of the provincials, speaking generally, produced laughter, and often appeared to be with difficulty understood. I shall, therefore, only give a list of the *Burma* words ; those of the other dialects are the same, where difference is not mentioned.

[I] English.	Myammaw.	Yakain.	Tanayntharee.	Yo.
1 Sun	Nay	---	---	---
2 Moon	La	---	---	---
3 Star	Kyee	Kyay	---	Kay
4 Earth	Myacgyee	---	---	---
5 Water	Yæ	Ree	---	Rae

6 Fire	Mee	---	---	---
7 Stone	Kiouk	---	---	Kionkay
8 Wind	Læ	Lee	---	---
9 Rain	[missing]	---	---	---
10 Man	Loo	---	---	---
11 Woman	Meemma	---	---	---
12 Child	Loogalay	*Looshee	---	---
13 Head	Kaung	---	---	---
14 Mouth	Parat	---	---	---
15 Arm	Læmmaung	---	---	---
16 Hand	Læk	---	---	Laik
17 Leg	Kæthaloum	---	---	Saloong
18 Foot	Kiæbamo	---	---	---
19 Beast	Taraitram	---	---	---
20 Bird	Hugæk	---	---	Knap
21 Fish	Ngaw	---	---	---
22 Good	Kaung	---	---	---
23 Bad	Makaung	---	---	---
24 Great	Kyee	---	---	---
25 Little	Ngay	---	---	---
26 Long	Shay	---	---	Shæ
27 Short	Ato	---	---	To
28 One	Teet	---	---	---
29 Two	Hueet	---	---	---
30 Three	Thoum	---	---	---

* Literally, a little man.

31	Four	Lay	---	---	---
32	Five	Ngaw	---	---	---
33	Six	Kiouk	---	---	---
34	Seven	Kuhneet	---	---	---
35	Eight	Sheet	---	---	---
36	Nine	Ko	---	---	---
37	Ten	Tazay	---	---	---
38	Eat	Zaw	---	---	---
39	Drink	Thouk	---	---	---
40	Sleep	Eit	---	---	---
41	Walk	Xleen	Hlay	---	Hlay
42	Sit	Tein	---	---	---
43	Stand	Ta	Mateinay	---	Mateenahay
44	Kill	That	Sot	---	Asatu
45	Yes	Houkkay	---	---	---
46	No	Mahouppoo	---	---	---
47	Here	Deemaw	---	---	Thaman
48	There	Houmaw	---	---	---
49	Above	Apomaw	---	---	Apobau
50	Below	Houkmaw	---	---	Auk

The next most prevalent language in *India* beyond the *Ganges*, is what we call the *Siamese*, a word probably corrupted from the *Shan* of the *Burmas*. The Siamnese race occupies the whole frontier of *Yunan*, extending on the east to *Tonquin* and *Cochinchina*, and to the south, down to the sea. It contains many states or kingdoms, mostly subject or tributary to the *Burmas*. I have only procured vocables of three of its dialects, which I here give complete, as they differ considerably.

The first dialect is that of the kingdom of *Siam*, the most polished people of eastern *India*. They called themselves to me simply *Tai* ; but Mr. Loubere says, that, in order to

distinguish themselves from a people to be afterwards mentioned, they add the word *Nay*, which signifies little. By the *Burmas*, from the vulgar name of their former capital city, they are called *Yoodaya* : by the people of *Pegu* they are named *Seem* : and by the *Chinese* of *Yunan*, *Syianlo*, or *Kyænlo*.

The second dialect of the *Siammese* language which I shall mention, is that of a people, who, to me, also called themselves simply *Tai*. I believe, however, they are the *Tai-yay*, or great *Tai*, of Mr. Loubere. They have been long subject to the *Burmas*, who call them *Myelapshan* : by the people of *Pegu* they are named *Sawn* ; *Thay* by the *Karayn* ; *Looktai* by the *Katheeshan* ; *Kabo* by the people of *Kathee*, or *Cussay* ; *Pawyee* by the *Chinese* and to me they were named *Lau* by the *Siammese* proper. Their country towards the north lies between the west side of *Yunan* and the *Erawade*, or great *Burma* river, descending down its eastern bank a considerable way : it then extends along the south side of *Yunan*, till it comes to the *Loukiang* river of *Martaban*, which forms its eastern boundary [,] on the south it extends to no great distance from *Martaban* ; and on the west it is separated from *Burma* Proper by a chain of mountains, that passes about fifteen miles to the east of *Ava*.

The third dialect of the *Siammese* language is that of a people called, by the *Burmas*, *Kathee Shawn* ; to themselves they assume the name of *Tai-loong*, or Great *Tai*. They are called *Moitay Kabo*, by the *Kathee*, people of *Cussay*. They inhabit the upper part of the *Kiaynduayn* river, and from that west to the *Erawade*. They have, in general, been subject to the king of *Munnypura* ; but, at present, are tributary to the *Burma* monarch.

II. English.	<i>Tai-nay.</i>	<i>Tai-yay.</i>	<i>Tai-loong.</i>
1 Sun	Roen	Kawan	Kangoon
2 Moon	Sun	Loen	Noon
3 Stars	Dau	Lau	Nau
4 Earth	Deen	---	Neen
5 Water	Nam	Nawhor Naum	Nam
6 Fire	Fai	Fai	Pui
7 Stone	Hin	---	Heen
8 Wind	Lam	Loum	Loom
9 Rain	Fon	Foon	Poon
10 Man	Kon	Kon	Koon
11 Woman	Poen	Paeyen	Pawneen
12 Child	Daeknooe	Lawen	Lookwoon
13 Head	Seeza	Ho	Hoo

14 Mouth	Pawk	Tsop	Pawk
15 Arm	Kayn	Komooee	Moo
16 Hand	Moo	Mooee	Pawmoo
17 Leg	Naung	Koteen	Hooko
18 Foot	Langteen	Swateen	Lungdin
19 Beast	Sawt	[missing]	Nook
20 Bird	Noup	Naut	Nook
21 Fish	Plaw	Paw	Paw
22 Good	Dee	Lee	Wanoo
23 Bad	Maidee	Malee	Mowan
24 Great	To	Loung	Loong
25 Little	Layt	Laik	Unleek
26 Long	Yan	Yan	Anyou
27 Short	San	Lot	Unlot
28 One	Noong	Noo	Aning
29 Two	So	Sang	Sowng
30 Three	Sam	Sam	Sam
31 Four	See	Shee	Shee
32 Five	Haw	Haw	Haw
33 Six	Hok	Houk	Hook
34 Seven	Kyæt	Sayt	Seet
35 Eight	Payt	Payt	Pæt
36 Nine	Kawo	Kaw	Kau
37 Ten	Seet	Sheet	Ship

38 Eat	*Kyeen Kau	Kyeen Kau	Kyeen Kau
39 Drink	Kyeen Nam	Kyeen Nawm	Kyeen Nam
40 Sleep	Non	Non	Non
41 Walk	Teeo	Hoe	Pei
42 Sit	Nanon	Nawn	Nung
43 Stand	Yoon	Lootfook	Peignung
44 Kill	Kaw	Po	Potai
45 Yes	O	Sai	Munna
46 No	Maishai	Mosai	Motsau
47 Here	Teenee	Teenai	Teenay
48 There	Teenon	Teepoon	Ponaw
49 Above	Bonon	Teenaipoon	Nooa
50 Below	Kang lang	Teetai	---

The next language of which I shall give a specimen, is that of the people who call themselves *Moitay*. Their country is situated between *Sylhet*, in *Benga*[l] and that of the Tailoong above-mentioned : to the north of it is *Assam* ; on the south *Arakan*, and the rude tribes bordering on that kingdom. Their capital city they name *Munnypura*. By the people of *Bengal* they are called *Muggaloos*, an appellation with which those we saw at *Amarapura* were totally unacquainted. This name, however, *Europeans* have applied to the country, turning it at the same time into *Meckley*. *Kathee* is the name given to this people by the *Burmas*, which we also have taken for the name of the country, and corrupted into *Cussay*. Mr. RENNEL having from *Bengal* obtained information of *Meckley*, and from *Ava* having heard of *Cussay*, never conceived that they were the same, and, accordingly, in his map of *Hindustan*, has laid down two kingdoms, *Cussay* and *Meckley*; for which, indeed, he had sufficient room, as by Captain Baker's account he had been induced to place *Ava* much too far to the east.

* Kau is *rice*, and Nam is *water*. Here, therefore, we have a nation with no word to express the difference between eating and drinking. The pleasures of the table must be in little request with them.

III. English.	Moitay.	English.	Moitay.
1 Sun	Noomeet	26 Long	Asamba
2 Moon	Taw	27 Short	Ataymba
3 Stars	Towang Meezat	28 One	Amaw
4 Earth	Leipauk	29 Two	Anee
5 Water	Eesheen	30 Three	Ahoom
6 Fire	Mee	31 Four	Maree
7 Stone	Noong Loong	32 Five	Mangaw
8 Wind	Noosheet	33 Six	Torok
9 Rain	No	34 Seven	Tarayt
10 Man	Mee	35 Eight	Neepaw
11 Woman	Noopee	36 Nine	Mapil
12 Child	Peeka	37 Ten	Tarrow
13 Head	Kop Kok	38 Eat	Sat
14 Mouth	Seembaw	39 Drink	Tawee
15 Arm	Pambom	40 Sleep	Keepee
16 Hand	Khoit	41 Walk	K[a]wnee
17 Leg	---	42 Si[t]	Pummee
18 Foot with ankle	Kho	43 Stand	Lapee
19 Beast	---	44 Kill	Hallo
20 Bird	Oosaik	45 Yes	Manee
21 Fish	Ngaw	46 No	Nattay
22 Good	Pawee or Pai	47 Here	Mashee
23 Bad	Pattay	48 there	Ada
24 Great	Sauwee	49 Above	Mataka
25 Little	Apeekauk	50 Below	Maka

In the intermediate space between *Bengal*, *Arakan*, the proper *Burma*, and the kingdom of *Munnaypura*, is a large mountainous and woody tract. It is occupied by many rude tribes. Among these, the most distinguished is that by the *Burmas* called *Kiayn*, from whom is derived the name of the great western branch of the *Erawade* ; for the *Kiaynduayn* signifies the fountain of the *Kiayn*. This people calls itself *Koloun*, and it seems to be a numerous race, universally spoken of, by its neighbours, as remarkable for simple honesty, industry, and an inoffensive disposition.

IV. English.	Koloun.	English.	Koloun.
1 Sun	Konee	20 Bird	Pakyoo
2 Moon	Klow	21 Fish	Ngoo
3 Stars	Assay	22 Good	Poælahoe
4 Earth	Day	23 Bad	Sælahoe
5 Water	Tooe	24 Great	Ahlayn
6 Fire	May	25 Little	Ame
7 Stone	Aloong	26 Long	Asaw
8 Wind	Klee	27 Short	Sooæhay
9 Rain	Yoo	28 One	Moo
10 Man	Kloun	29 Two	Palme
11 Woman	Patoo	30 Three	Patoon
12 Child	Saeme	31 Four	Poonhee
13 Head	Mulloo	32 Five	Poonho
14 Mouth	Mawkoo	33 Six	Poosouk
15 Arm	Maboam	34 Seven	Pooæsæ
16 Hand	Mukoo	35 Eight	Pooæsay
17 Leg	Manwam	36 Nine	Poongo
18 Foot	Kopaung	37 Ten	Poohaw
19 Beast	Pakyoo	38 Eat	Kayawæ

39 Drink	Koyawee	45 Yes	Ashæba
40 Sleep	Eitsha	46 No	Seehay
41 Walk	Hlayæshoe	47 Here	Næa
42 Sit	Own	48 there	Tsooa
43 Stand	Undoon	49 Above	Akloengung
44 Kill	Say, oe	50 Below	Akoa

Another rude nation, which shelters itself in the recesses of hills and woods, from the violence of its insolent neighbours, is named, by the *Burmas*, *Karayn* ; and *Kadoon* by the people of *Pegu*. They are most numerous in the *Pegu* kingdom, and, like the *Kiayn*, are distinguished for their innocence and industry. By the *Burmas* they are said to be of two kinds ; *Burma* and *Talain Karayn*. Some of them, with whom I conversed, seemed to understand this distinction, calling the former *Passooko*, and the latter *Maploo*. This, however, probably arose from these individuals being better acquainted with the *Burma* ideas than the generality of their countrymen ; for the greater part of those with whom I conversed, said, that all *Karayn* were the same, and called them *Play*. I am, however, not certain if I understood them rightly ; nor do I know that I have obtained the proper name of this tribe. I have given a vocabulary of each of these, who seemed to understand the distinction of *Burma* and *Talain Karayn*, and two different villages who did not understand the difference ; for in this nation I found the villages differing very much in dialect ; even where not distant, probably owing to their having little communication one with another. It must be observed, that, in using an interpreter, one is very liable to mistakes, and those I had were often very ignorant.

V. English.	<i>Passooko.</i>	<i>Maploo.</i>	<i>Play, No. 1</i>	<i>Play, No. 2</i>
1 Sun	Moomay	Moo	Mooi	Moomay
2 Moon	Law	Law	Law	Poolaw
3 Stars	Tsaw	Sheeaw	Shaw	Shaw
4 Earth	Katchaykoo	Kolangkoo	Kako	Laukoo
5 Water	Tee	Tee	Tee	Tee
6 Fire	Mee	Meeung	Meea	Mee
7 Stone	Loe	Loong, Noong Lung	---	Loung
8 Wind	Kallee	Lee	Lee	Lee
9 Rain	Tachoo	Tchatchang	Moko	Moko

10 Man	Paganyo	Pashaw	Pasha	Paploom, or Pasha
11 Woman	Pomoo	Pomoo	Pummee	Pammoe
12 Child	Pozaho	Possaw	Napootha	Apoza
13 Head	Kozohui	Kohui	Kohui	Pokoohui
14 Mouth	Patako	Pano	Ganoo	Pano
15 Arm	Tchoobawlee	Tchoobawlee	Atsyoodoo	Tchoobawlee
16 Hand	Patchoo	Poitchoo	Kutshoo	Tchooasee
17 Leg	Kadoe	Pokaw	Kandoo	Kandoo
18 Foot	Konyawko	Kanyakoo	Kanyako	Kanyasaw
19 Beast	T'hoo	Too	---	---
20 Bird	T'hoo	Too	Kalo	To
21 Fish	Nyaw	Zyaw	Ya	Ya
22 Good	Ngeetchawmaw	Ngee	Gyee	Gyee
23 Bad	Taw ngee baw	Nguay	Gyeeay	Gyeeay
24 Great	Pawdoo	Hhoo	Uddo	Doo
25 Little	Tchecka	Tchei	Atsei	Atsee
26 Long	To atcho maw	T'ho	Loeya	Ato
27 Short	P'hecko	P'hoe	Apoe	Apoe
28 One	Taydoe	Nadoe	Laydoe	Laydoe
29 Two	Kee-doe	Nee-doe	Nee-doe	Nee-doe
30 Three	So-doe	Song-doe	Soung-doe	Soung-doe
31 Four	Looee-doe	Lee-du	Lee-doe	Lee-doe
32 Five	Yay-doe	Yay-doe	Yay-doe	Ya-doe
33 Six	Hoo-doe	Hoo doe	Koo-doe	Koo-doe
34 Seven	Nooee-doe	Noay-doe	Noæ-doe	Noæo-do

35 Eight	Ho-doe	Ho-doe	Ko-doe	Ko-doe
36 Nine	Kooee-doe	Kooee-doe	Kooee-doe	Kooee-doe
37 Ten	Tatchee	Leitchee	Tassee	Laytsee
38 Eat	Po,c	Aw	Ang	Ang
39 Drink	Oo	O	O	O
40 Sleep	Prammee	Mee	Mee	Mee
41 Walk	Latcholia	Leetalay	Rakuæ	Lakuæ
42 Sit	Tcheenaw	Tseingaw	Tysana	Tsayna
43 Stand	Tchocto	Tchonto	Tsaynagay	la-Gnaythoe
44 Kill	Klo	P'hee	Pætegul	Paythee
45 Yes	Maylee	Moayyoo	Moiyoo	Moithay
46 No	Tamaybaw	Moæ	Moi	Moi
47 Here	Loee	Layee	Leyoo	Layee
48 There	Lubanee	Loo	Læyo	Læyo
49 Above	Mokoo	Mokoo	Læpanko	Læpanko
50 Below	Hokoo	Lankoo	Læpaula	Læpaula

To this kingdom, the natives of which call themselves *Moan*, we have given the name of *Pegu*, a corruption of the vulgar appellation of its capital city, *Bagoo* ; the polite name of the city among its natives having been *Dam Hanga*, as among the *Burmas*, *Hanzawade*. This people are named *Talain* by the *Burmas* and *Chinese* of *Yunan* ; *Lawoo* by the *Karayn* ; and *Tarain* by the *Tai-loong* : their kingdom extends along the mouths of the two great rivers *Erawade* and *Thauluayn*, or of *Ava* and *Martaban*, from the frontiers of *Arakan* to those of *Siam*.

VI. English.	Moan.	English.	Moan.
1 Sun	Knooay Tangooy	4 Earth	Toe
2 Moon	Katoo	5 Water	Nawt
3 Stars	Shawnaw	6 Fire	Komot
		7 Stone	---

8 Wind	Kyeaw	33 Six	Teraw
9 Rain	Proay	34 Seven	Kapo
10 Man	Puee	35 Eight	Tatsam
11 Woman	Preau	36 Nine	Kaffee
12 Child	Koon	37 Ten	Tlo
13 Head	Kadap	38 Eat	Tsapoung. Poung, I believe, is rice.
14 Mouth	Paun	39 Drink	Saung nawt. Nawt is water.
15 Arm	Toay	40 Sleep	Steik
16 Hand	Kanna Toay	41 Walk	Au
17 Leg	Kadot-prawt	42 Sit	Katcho
18 Foot	Kanat zein	43 Stand	Katau
19 Beast	---	44 Kill	Taw
20 Bird	Seen ngat	45 Yes	Taukua
21 Fish	Kaw	46 No	Auto
22 Good	Kah	47 Here	Noomano
23 Bad	Hookah	48 There	Taoko
24 Great	Mor	49 Above	Tattoo commooee
25 Little	Bok	50 Below	Tauamo
26 Long	Kloein		
27 Short	Klee		
28 One	Mooi		
29 Two	Bau		
30 Three	Pooi		
31 Four	Pou		
32 Five	Soon		

These six are all the languages of this great *eastern* nation, of which, during my stay in the *Burma* Empire, I was able to procure vocables sufficient for my purpose. Although they appear very different at first sight, and the language of one race is totally unintelligible to the others, yet I can perceive in them all some coincidences ; and a knowledge of the languages, with their obsolete words, their phrases, their inflections of words, and elisions, *cuphoniæ causa*, would, perhaps, shew many more. Those that have the greatest affinity are in Tab. I. IV. And V. Mr. GILCHRIST, whose knowledge of the common dialects in use on the banks of the *Ganges* is, I believe, exceeded by that of no *European*, was so obliging as to look over these vocabularies ; but he could not trace the smallest relation between the languages.

I shall now add three dialects, spoken in the *Burma* Empire, but evidently derived from the language of the *Hindu* nation.

The first is that spoken by the *Mohammedans*, who have long settled in *Arakan*, and who call themselves *Rooinga*, or natives of *Arakan*.

The second dialect is that spoken by the *Hindus* of *Arakan*. I procured it from a *Brahmen* and his attendants, who had been brought to *Amarapura* by the king's edlest son, on his return from the conquest of *Arakan*. They call themselves *Rossawn*, and, for what reason I do not know, wanted to persuade me that theirs was the common language of *Arakan*. Both these tribes, by the real natives of *Arakan*, are called *Kulaw Yakain*, or stranger *Arakan*.

The last dialect of the *Hindustanee* which I shall mention, is that of a people called, by the *Burmas*, *Aykobat*, many of them are slaves at *Amarapura*. By one of them I was informed, that they had called themselves *Banga* ; that formerly they had kings of their own ; but that, in his father's time, their kingdom had been overturned by the king of *Munnypura*, who carried away a great part of the inhabitants to his residence.

When that was taken last by the *Burmas*, which was about fifteen years ago, this man was one of the many captives who were brought to *Ava*. He said also, that *Banga* was seven days' journey south-west from *Munnypura* : it must, therefore, be on the frontiers of *Bengal*, and may, perhaps, be the country called in our maps *Cashar*.

Mr. GILCHRIST has been so good as to examine particularly these two dialects, and to mark thus (*) those words which come nearest the *Hindustanee* spoken on the *Ganges* ; and thus (†) those not so evidently in connection with the same, but which shew resemblance by analogy.

<i>English.</i>	<i>Rooinga.</i>	<i>Rossawn.</i>	<i>Banga.</i>
1 Sun	Bel	*Sooja	Bayllee
2 Moon	Sawn	Sundsa	Satkan
3 Stars	Tara	*Nokyoto	*Tara
4 Earth	Kool	Murtika	*Matee
5 Water	Pannæ	*Dsol	*Pannæ
6 Fire	Auin	*Aaganeë	Zee
7 Stone	Sheel	*Sheel	*Heel

8 Wind	Bau	*Pawun	*Bo
9 Rain	Jorail	†Bistee	*Booun
10 Man	Manush	†Moanusa	*Manoo
11 Woman	Meealaw	Stree	Zaylan
12 Child	Gourapa	*Balouk	Sogwo
13 Head	Mata	Mustok	Teekgo
14 Mouth	Gall	Bodon	Totohan
15 Arm	Bahara	*Baho	Paepoung
16 Hand	Hat	Osto	Hatkan
17 Leg	Ban	†Podo	Torooa
18 Foot	Pau	Pata	Zankan
19 Beast	---	Zoomtroo	Sasee sangee
20 Bird	Paik	†Pookyee	†Pakya
21 Fish	Maws	Mootsæ	†Mas
22 Good	Goom	Gam	Hoba
23 Bad	Goom nay	Gumnay	Hoba nay
24 Great	Boddau	Dangor	Domorgo
25 Little	Thuddee	*Tsooto	Hooroogo
26 Long	Botdean	Deengol	Deengul
27 Short	Banick	*Batee	*Batee
28 One	Awg	*Aik	*Ak
29 Two	Doo	*Doo	De
30 Three	Teen	*Teen	†Teen
31 Four	Tchair	*Tsar	*Saree
32 Five	Pansoe	*Paus	*Pas
33 Six	Saw	*Tso	*Tsæ
34 Seven	Sat	*Sat	*Hat

35 Eight	Awtoa	†Asto	*Awt
36 Nine	Nonaw	*No	*No
37 Ten	Dussoa	*Dos	*Dos
38 Eat	Kau	*Kawai	†Kæk
39 Drink	Karin	Kawo	†Peek
40 Sleep	Layrow	†Needsara	Hooleek
41 Walk	Pawkay	Bayra	†O-teea-ootea
42 Sir	Boihow	†Boesho	†Bo
43 Stand	Tcheilayto	*Karao	†Oot
44 Kill	Marim	*Maro	*Mar
45 Yes	Hoi	Oir	Oo
46 No	Etibar	*Noay	*Naway
47 Here	Hayray	Etag	Erang
48 There	Horay	Horay	Orung
49 Above	Ouchalo	*Ooper	Goa
50 Below	Ayray	Hayray	†Tol

SEMINAR SUMMARY

Politics and Press Censorship in British Burma: The case of the *Moulmein Chronicle*

William Womack

Censorship in Burma has become a topic of considerable interest in recent years. Academic literature has also focused on the press as a tool of propaganda under British imperialism. Yet, precious little has been done on the history of censorship and other forms of press control under the British colonial administration in Burma. Burma's first newspaper, the *Maulmain Chronicle*, was also Burma's first casualty to the colonial press laws. Its story shows that in the middle of the 19th century, colonial officials manipulated the press laws for political or personal ends, and that the English press served less as a tool of propaganda than a means for private merchants to manipulate and antagonize the administration.

The laws controlling the press in India were patterned on the press laws in England. Formed in the crucible of radical politics and spurred on by widespread libel in the 18th and early 19th century press, these laws protected public officials from scurrilous personal attacks. This took on added significance in the colonies, where the appearance of benevolent moral superiority was seen as vital to preserving an unquestioned English rule. The Indian press laws changed periodically to reflect the views of the current governor-general. Under Warren Hastings and Lord Wellesley, offending editors were imprisoned or deported. The legal provision for outright censorship first appeared in 1795, but was abolished under Lord Hastings in 1818 when new rules were implemented. These rules were cast so broadly, however, that if followed to the letter, little freedom remained. Further restrictions appeared under the administration of John Adam in the form of mandatory licensing for all publishers. When in Sir Charles Metcalfe lifted this licensing requirement in 1835, a boom in newspaper publishing ensued.

The newspaper boom spread to Burma in 1837, when A.E. Blundell, then Commissioner of the Tenasserim Provinces, established a weekly paper, the *Maulmain Chronicle*, with his own funds. Reproved by the Government of Bengal for this venture, he transferred ownership of the paper to the local education committee after recouping his losses.¹ As editor, Blundell engaged the services of George Hough, a former missionary printer and head of the government Free School in Moulmein.² Appearing on April 15, 1837, the first issue set out its objectives: "This paper will be devoted to information connected with these provinces and surrounding countries, strictly avoiding all political and controversial subjects."³

¹ P. E. Jamieson, and B. O. Binns, *Gazetteer for Amherst District* (Rangoon: Burma -- Supt., Govt. Printing and Stationery, 1935): 102

² Phinney, Frank Dennison, *The American Baptist Mission Press, Rangoon, Burma; Historical Descriptive* (Rangoon: The American Baptist Mission Press, [1917?]): 11

³ *The Maulmain Chronicle* 1:1 (April 15, 1837): 1

But politics and controversy are a newspaper's lifeblood. Blundell did not silence his critics in Bengal by relinquishing his ownership of the *Chronicle*. The paper soon became a mouthpiece for Moulmein's motley merchant community, on whom the Commissioner depended for revenue. Many of the merchants, angered by King Tharrawaddy's resistance to terms set out in the treaty of Yandabo, clamoured for renewed war with the Burmese empire. Some complained of abuses by officials in the Burmese territories. Blundell's conciliatory approach to the merchants was seen to strain Anglo-Burmese relations, prompting Lord Ellenborough's appraisal of Blundell as, "a commissioner in the hands of merchants and their press."⁴

Blundell had gone to Moulmein from Prince of Wales Island, where he had absorbed the freewheeling, improvisational administrative style of the Straits. To impose more order in Tenasserim, Bengal replaced Blundell with a series of Commissioners more attuned to the politics of the subcontinent. The second of these, Henry Durand, had served as Lord Ellenborough's private secretary. Durand found Moulmein "a very troublesome place, the European part of the community," he complained, "incites the mixed population to discontent whenever they have the opportunity."⁵ He set about uncovering corrupt practices by merchants, cracking down on local Europeans in an effort to ease tensions with the neighbouring Burmese. His heavy-handed approach alienated the English-speaking residents, including his own subordinates. The burden of complaints against him led to his removal from the post in 1846.⁶

One of these complaints involved the editor of the *Maulmain Chronicle*, Emanuel Abreu. Durand's housecleaning policy targeted Abreu for reasons that remain unclear. Formerly an accountant in the Paymaster General's office, Abreu had been sacked due to charges of misconduct that were never proven.⁷ When Durand's assistant, Maj. W.C. McLeod, tried to hire Abreu and another man who was under criminal investigation, Durand relieved McLeod of his job.⁸ Perhaps Abreu retaliated in the pages of the *Chronicle*.⁹ Whatever the case, in the summer of 1846, Durand arrested Abreu, fined him Rs. 3,000, and sentenced him to two years in prison for violating articles 7 and 8 of the 1835 Press Act.¹⁰ These clauses required all newspapers to print the name of their owner, publisher, and printer in every issue. Abreu neglected to include this information in two issues of the *Chronicle*, and several weeks later, he was arrested. He claimed in his defence that it had been an oversight, partly due to the fact that he had lost his accustomed printer.¹¹ On the force of complaints by Abreu, McLeod, and others, the Bengal government recalled Durand from his post. The Deputy governor wrote, "Captain Durand evidently considers himself as placed in a position independent of the authority of the Bengal Government."¹²

The case of the *Maulmain Chronicle* demonstrates how easily the colonial press laws could be used for personal or political ends. While direct censorship was not legal at that time, the state retained broad powers of legal control that opened the door for abuses. This case also highlights the conflicted relationship between the colonial state and the

⁴ Ellenborough to Fitzgerald, 17 April 1843, quoted in Oliver Pollak, *Empires in Collision: Anglo-Burmese Relations in the Mid-19th Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979): 47

⁵ Quoted in Pollack, *Empires in Collision*, 49

⁶ F.J. Halliday to H.M. Durand, 16 Dec. 1846, in *Bengal Judicial Consultations*, 142/57 no. 173

⁷ G.L. Pendergrast, Copy of letter dated 13 May 1843 to Lt. R.W.H. Leycester, in *Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations*, 2 Sept. 1846, no. 164.; H.M. Durand, Copy of letter dated 19 August 1846 to Maj. W.C. McLeod, *Bengal Criminal Judicial Consultations*, 2 Sept. 1846, no. 159

⁸ Durand to McLeod, 15 August 1846, in *Bengal Judicial Consultations*, 142/57 no. 159

⁹ The last two years of the *Chronicle* are not included in the British Library's collection.

¹⁰ E. Abreu, "Summary of Court Proceedings," *Bengal Judicial Consultations*, 142/57 no. 168

¹¹ T.G.E.G. Kenney to E. Abreu, 7 Aug. 1846, in *Bengal Judicial Consultations* 142/54, no. 155

¹² J.H. Maddock, "Minute by the Hon'ble the Deputy Governor of Bengal," 3 October 1846,

press at the dawn of newspaper publishing in Burma. Far from acting as an organ of colonial propaganda, the *Maulmain Chronicle* reflected the views of the local English-speaking community, and openly criticized officials and official policy. Although the *Chronicle* ceased publication at the time of Abreu's arrest, other papers – in English, Burmese, and a number of minority languages – continued to appear throughout the colonial period. These must all be considered in order to complete the picture of relations between newspapers and the colonial state in Burma.

DOCUMENTS

The *SBBR* will be publishing primary documents in each issue, drawn from old newspapers, archives, and other collections. Although the documents included in this issue are pre-twentieth century, we would encourage the contribution by readers of these and other kinds of twentieth-century primary sources, including unpublished personal accounts. The documents will be numbered consecutively across issues, so that a consistent number referencing system will be available.

M. W. C.

This issue: ***Documents on Western Burmese Economic History***

Document Number 1

Extract of a Letter dated Nagore, 7th July 1761

William Turner¹

In your last you mentioned the Intention you have of going to ARRACAN, I heartily wish you success, and have here inclosed a *List* of what things will do, and the quantity ; it is a very troublesome Place, but the Gains are very great ; but the the sum of money is so small that you invest, that at most you ca invest in five or six months, will be six or eight thousand Rupees, unless there has not been a Ship there this two or three years, in which case you will be able to invest as much more ; the *Port Charges* will be 12 or 14 hundred Rupees, what I mean is the *Customs*, or *Duties* on *Import* and *Export*; if there is a great call for Wax, in *Calcutta*, I would advise you to carry as much ready money as you can, for then you'll get away from there the sooner, and will not be troubled to sell your goods at retail ; for there is not a Man there, that can take 500 Rupees of things at once, without trust, and that you must never do, not even the Great men ; for by trusting them I have been detained two or three Months for my Money ; you may venture to trust the King, as you can cut off so much of his Dutys ; don't let your Invoice of these things exceed 4000 Rupees, let the rest be in ready cash ; as your *Rupees* that you carry there, will be all *new coined* by the King, it will be best to carry *Arcot Rupees*, as they weigh the same as *Sicca*, at least the difference is only 2 [Per] Cent by this you will save 7 or 8 [Per] Cent on 6 or 7 thousand Rupees ; this is all that, I can think at present, will be of any service.

[List of Items to Bring to Arakan]

Cowreys, 400 Rs. (Maldivia, if you can get them.)

Iron, 40 Maund.

Steel, 25 Maund.

Hartall, 3 Maund (China.)

Sindure, 1 Maund.

Singerrys, 1 Maund.

¹ This document was published in A. Dalrymple, *Oriental Repertory*, 2 vols. (London: for the East India Company by William Ballintine, 1808): I, 117-228. I have thus far been unable to locate the unpublished version of this document.

China Cups, 1000 (in the Moors taste.)
 [China] Dishes, 200 [in the Moors taste]
 Musk, one Sear.
 Opium, 5 Sear or 10 Sear.
 Isinglass, 5 Sear (large pieces, such as you put in Windows.)
 Painted Cullemcurrys, 40 Pieces (from the Coast).
 Raw Silk, 1 Maund.
 Muga Silk, 4 Maund.
 Hing, 1 Maund.
 Corral, 1000 Rs. Worth (large and good) the long sort will do.
 Lead, 5 or 6 Maunds.
 If Salt is cheap in Calcutta, take in 2 or 3 hundred Maunds by way of Ballast.

Document Number 2

Memorandum of Arracan Trade, circa 1770s

Anonymous²

The Articles of Trade at Arracan are Elephants teeth, wax, timber, coarse Durians, Beetle, Rice, Gold ["Cotton" is penned here under different hand], and Silver, some Valuable stores. Elephants teeth which are large and fine are 25 Rupees per Bengal Maund. Wax is the same price. Timber is Very Cheap, the Rajah gave me leave to cut as much as I chose, a large quantity might be had for some small presents to the Raja. The Dureans are cheap but are not fine or is there any great quantity of them ["about 2 Rs. Per Maund" is penned in the margin here under different hand]. Of Berth [?] may be had any quantity as the Country abounds with it, the Price is two tuns of Cowries per maund.

Rice is from two to three Bengal bags for a Rupee according to the goodness. Gold and Silver has [sic] been Scarce of late Years among owing to their Civil Wars which has hindered the people of the back countries from coming down, provisions may be Salted there very cheap. A large fat Bullock is to be bought there for three Rupees. There is [sic] the remains of three Factories which they say belonged to the English, Portuguese, and Dutch but they were obliged to quit them on Account of the impositions of the frequent Succession of Rajahs who all greatly opposed them but they now see the advantage of having Europeans among them and it is the desire of the Raja to have a trade established in his country which has been long stop'd. They not having had a ship there these ten years. The River of Arracan is a fine River having a good depth of water and the Tides not near so rapid as in Bengal River [.] [T]here is a great plenty of very fine Timber and labour so extremely cheap that Ships of any burthen may be built there both Cheape and better than at Pegu.

² This document was found in the Hastings Papers, British Library, London Add. Mss. 29210, ff. 334-336. There is no date provided, by the location of the ms and the context of events listed in the account suggest that it is circa 1770s. -- M.W.C.

Document Number 3

Editor's Note:

The following account is an original found in the Hastings Papers. This account was published in altered form in *Asiatick Miscellany* 1 (1785): 316-326, in which form it was reprinted in *Asiatic Annual Register* (1799): 157-163, in both cases under the title of "An Account of Aracan (1777)." Although Major R. E. Roberts is mentioned as having communicated the piece to the publishers, no author is provided in the original archival copy. Although this document was recently published,³ it was the altered published version and no attempt was apparently made to secure the original document in its original form. This we have attempted to do here.

M. W. C.

History of the Mugs, 1777

Anonymous⁴

In February last the people of Arracan, commonly called mugs, carried off from the most Southern parts of Bengal, about eighteen hundred men, women and children: they arrived at Aracan, (according to the Persian orthography Rekheng) after a voyage of ten days. Upon their arrival there, they were conducted to the rajah, or sovereign, who chose from among them, for his slaves, all the handicraftsmen, and most useful persons; amounting to about one fourth of the whole number: the rest he returned to the captors; who conducted them by ropes about their necks, to a market; and there sold them for twenty, to seventy rupee, each; according to their strength abilities &ca. The purchasers assigned them the cultivation of their lands, and other laborious employments; giving each person for his monthly support, only fifteen seers of rice.

When these people arrived at Rekheng; a man named Duppung Geree, was the rajah, and one Kuddul Poree his kutwal. The rajah wanted to put the kutwal to death; but the latter getting information of his design; made his escape to a village, and prevailed on the inhabitants, to assist him in deposing the rajah. When the rebels made their intentions suspected, by assembling in arms, the rajah ordered his son-in-law, to go, with a small army, and put the kutwal to death: A battle was fought between the two armies, and the rajah's son-in-law defeated, and killed. After this battle, the kutwal proceeded, with his partizans, to the rajah's fort; at his approach all the rajah's adherents, not excepting his relations, fled, and left him alone, to the revenge of the kutwal: rhe rajah hid himself, but was soon discovered, and put to death. After Duppung Geree's death, Kuddul Poree proclaimed himself rajah, sent for all the former rajah's relations, and servants; and such of them, as did not make him handsome presents were put to death.

Four days after this revolution, the tranquility of the country not yet being restored, twenty five men, and two women, native, of Bengal (all of whom, were of the number of those carried to Rekheng in February last; except one man, named Buddul Khawn, of Backergunge, who was carried thither about thirteen years ago.) took the opportunity, to seize on a boat, and to make their escape in it. They proceeded in the boat, for one day; and then quitted it, to travel by land. When they quitted the boat, they landed in a woody and uninhabited part of Rekheng; and continued their rout, on the banks of small rivers, to

³ Jacques Leider, "An Account of Arakan," *Aseanie* 3 (1999): 125-149.

⁴ This document was found in the Hastings Papers, British Library, London Add. Mss. 29210, ff. 51-68.

avoid wild beasts, and impenetrable woods. They were seven days travelling from Rekheng* to Islamabad, and arrived here the fifteenth instant.

The produce of Rekheng, with respect to vegetables; is nearly the same as Bengal; except that no part of it produces the mulberry tree: with respect to animals, it neither produces sheep, horses, or jackals; but great plenty of geese, fowls, ducks, goats, kine, bufallows, elephants, deer, hogs, dogs, & bees. As to its manufactures; they make wood oil, and several kinds of coarse cloths. Their trade, consists in exporting the said manufactures, elephants teeth, and wax, and in importing fine cloths, and a few other articles, from Bengal.

The Rekheng merchants that come to Bengal, never plunder or carry away people from thence; but carry on their trade peaceably as merchants should. The rajah of Rekheng readily grants the merchants permission to trade to Bengal; but he will not permit any of his subjects, to leave his country, to plunder, and make slaves; until he has received from them, a considerable sum of money. When these plunderers return to Rekheng; every thing they have made prize of, is carried to the rajah; of the goods, it is his allowed privilege, to take half; and of the prisoners one fourth; but he generally exacts almost the lion's share: for which reason, the mugs endeavour to secret all the silver and gold, that they collect in these expeditions: and to that end, when they make a rich prize, they put all the prisoners to death.

There is but one fort in Rekheng; the rajah resides in it; it consists of three squares, one within the other; each square surrounded with walls, made of brick and stone. The two inner walls, are about fourteen feet high, the outer wall about twelve feet; the thickness of each of the walls, is about eight feet: they are at this time, greatly decayed, and may be easily demolished. The fort, has no ditch to it; or any outwork, to prevent the approach of an enemy; and is said to have been built, merely to secure the rajah from the insurrections of the natives. It is said to be situated from the northern boundary of Rekheng, seven days journey; from the southern, three days; from the eastern boundary, one day; and the same distance from the western boundary, or the sea. A river, runs from the sea very near the fort; where it is about twenty feet broad: large boats can go to the fort. The banks of the river are cultivated. There are about one thousand pieces of cannon, lying between two of the fort walls: only five or six of them, are mounted on carriages; and even those carriages; are too much decayed, to be serviceable. There are a very few, small brass cannon; all the others, are thought to be so much decayed by time, by being constantly exposed to the weather, that they cannot be used. Under different bamboo, and straw sheds, in the fort, are kept a great many cannon balls, of different sizes; a large quantity of gunpowder, in earthen pots; and several match-locks. The rajah has also seven europe muskets, which are always carried in his train: but, as well as the match-locks are unserviceable. He has six small horses (tattoos) which, it is said, he got from Chittagong.

From all the accounts, that I have been able to obtain of Rekheng; it appears that the natives of that country, are a dastardly race of people; and have only courage, to attack defenceless bengal merchants and boatmen: that they depend more on the timidity of the persons they attack, and the strength of their oars; than on the goodness of their arms, or personal prowess.

One Tahes Mahmud, a native of Bengal, was formerly the Rekheng rajah's derrawan, and afterwards became his dewan: having gained some riches, in that post; the rajah was determined to deprive him of them; and for that purpose to put him to death. The dewan got notice of this design, and fled to Chittagong, with about two thousand of his countrymen, and arrived here near two years ago. The rajah, has frequently demanded

* [original note] That is to say, from the northern boundary of Rekheng.

him, of this government, and has sent several threatening, and very insolent letters, because, his demand was not complied with. But, the persons who are lately returned from Rekheng, say, that a report, frequently becomes current there, that Tahes Mahmud, is on his way thither; with an armed force, belonging to the English: and, that at such times, the people residing about the fort; and even the rajah's relations, and attendants, fly to the hills, and woods, leaving him alone, till they discover the falsity of the report. Tahes Mahmud is now a Sherrickdar of this province.

Almost three fourths, of the inhabitants of Rekheng; are said, to be natives of Bengal; or descendants of such: who constantly pray, that the English, may send a force to deliver them from their slavery, and restore them to their country; in that case, they have agreed among themselves, to assist their deliverers to the utmost of their power.

The hills that join Rekheng, to the eastward; are inhabited by a people called Kheng; which is also the name of the country. These people, have a rooted enmity, to the native inhabitants of Rekheng; and miss no opportunity of carrying them off to their own country, for slaves; but they never assault or injure the bengal inhabitants. It is said, that the Kheng never make open war, with the mugs; but only assault them by surprise. The dress of the kheng, consists only of a piece of coarse cloth, about the breadth of a hand, which they wear round the middle; they use no turbans, or ever shave the head; but tie all the hair together, on the fore part, or crown of the head; they spot their faces with black paint, and they resemble the natives of Bengal, in their features, shapes, and statures.

The Rekheng rajah, governs his country in the most despotic manner: he is absolute over the lives, and properties, of his subjects. In his administration; his only guides, are his own reason, and passions. He is the sole judge of all causes, criminal, and civil. The parties are brought before him; he hears what they have to say, and immediately gives judgement. Criminals are punished by flogging, dismembering, beheading, and impaling: if flogging is the sentence, it is executed immediately before him; but if either of the other punishments, the criminal is conducted to a building, at a little distance, where the sentence is immediately executed.

When the rajah goes abroad, he is carried on a kind of litter, (made with two bamboos, fastened together by rattans, on which the rajah sits) by four men; and is attended by men armed with long bills, and with spears; (the only arms used by the mugs) and the six europe muskets, before mentioned.

When the rajah administers justice; he sits only on a mat, on a place elevated above the heads of the people. An eunuch attends on him, to repeat the orders he gives. The eunuch stands with his hands on his knees; so that his body is bent forward; a position expressive of respect, and attention; which he is not suffered to vary, during his continuance, in the rajah's preference: all other persons except the father, and father-in-law, of the rajah. while in his presence, kneel, bend their bodies forward, turn one side of the head to him, and hold both hands to the ear of that side: this, I think, at once signifies; that they salute him; are attentive to any order he may be pleased to give; and ready to execute it.

The sovereignty of Rekheng, is neither hereditary nor elective; but is possessed, by whoever is able, and willing to take it: the people, readily submitting to the conqueror.

The natives of Rekheng are much given, to excess in drinking, and almost every man, distills the arrack he uses. They never use tom-toms, but at funerals.

There are very few inhabitants on the sea coast. Fresh water is both good and plenty; as is also rice; as much of that grain may be bought for two puns of cowries; as

twenty men may make a meal on. A rekheng rupee is equal to twelve annas dussmassa; or in Rekheng, to three kahawon, or forty eight puns of cowries; so that if we allow twelve chattaks of rice, for each man's meal, twenty men will eat fifteen seers; the price of which, being two puns of cowries, one rekheng rupee's worth of rice, will be nine of our maunds, equal to twelve maunds for a dussmassa rupee.

The rajah has a mint in his fort, and coins silver rupees. His house, which is in the fort, is built with bamboos and straw, and has only upper apartments, at a considerable height from the ground. Very few persons, beside the rajah's family, live in the fort. The land round the fort, is level and cultivated, with a few houses, here and there; and the country to it, from the sea, is mostly cultivated; all of it clear of jungle; and the fort is of easy access, even to artillery on that side.

About two years ago, above two thousand persons, men, women, and children, (near a fourth of whom had at different times, left this province, to avoid the oppressions of the zemindars; the rest had been carried to Rekheng by the natives of that country and there sold for slaves) escaped from Rekheng, and came to a place called Rawmoo, in the most southern part of this province; from thence they sent four deputies to the chief, to inform him of their arrival, and to request him, to assign them lands, for their maintenance. The chief, readily promised to comply with the request, and told them to look out for such uncultivated lands as they might chuse to reside on. They pitched upon lands near Rawmoo, Kurwan, and Chukurreah; which were granted them, on condition, that they should pay no rent, till the expiration of three years; and that they should then pay, the customary rent. A short time after (two or three months) such of the men, as had not been able to bring their wives, and children, away with them; to the number of about eight hundred, returned to Rekheng, and have not since been heard of; but are supposed to have arrived safe. The settling of them so near Rekheng, both by sea and land, as the places abovementioned, was certainly very impolitic; as was fully proved by the loss of so many useful subjects; for their return to this province again, cannot be expected; the government of Rekheng will certainly take warning, from its former remissness, and use proper means, to prevent a second escape. The loss of these people, would have been effectually prevented, had they been settled inland, in the northern parts of the province; from whence it would not have been so easy, for them to go to Rekheng; nor would the rajah of that country, have had it so much in his power, to send his agents among them, to entice them away; which is strongly suspected, to have been partly the cause of their return.

We are traditionally informed; that the people of Rekheng have from time immemorial, plundered the southern parts of Bengal; and carried the inhabitants into slavery; that they have been so hostile, as to descend on the coast of Chittagong, proceed into that country; plunder, and burn, the villages, destroy what they could not carry away, and make slaves of the inhabitants. The vestiges of a fortification that once surrounded, the town of Islamabad, still remains; and it is well known, that this fortification, was not only intended as a place of refuge to the inhabitants of the country; but also, to secure the inhabitants of the town, from being pillaged by these invaders; to such lengths did they then proceed.

Before this province, was ceded to the company; the government, was at an immense expence, to maintain a marine and land force, to repel the mugs; but the great extent of the Chittagong coast, made it impossible, to prevent their landing on some part of it, and carrying off considerable booties. It is surprising, that the government did not perceive, that the only effectual way, to put a stop to these invasions, would have been to attack the invaders in their own country, which is both near, and of easy access. For some time, after the cession of this province to the company; it was found necessary, to keep a considerable force for its protection; but the government being, at that time, rather less

supine, than formerly; was not contented, with barely repulsing the invaders; which was the case before, except, in a very few instances; but followed them to sea, and soon made them desist from their invasions. Since that time, till very lately, an interval of thirteen or fourteen years; they have not been pretty quiet; but, as it is not said, that we gave them any very remarkable defeat, and it is certain, that we never invaded their country; I cannot attribute their peaceable behaviour, for so long a time, solely to their fear of the english force; but suppose, it must have been partly owing, to an invasion of their country, by another nation; to a dearth and epidemic disease; or to a change in their government: but to whatever cause it was owing, it is certain, as I said before, that they did not attack this province for considerable time.

It is said that the great extent of country, now called the Sunderbunds; was formerly populous, and well cultivated; and that its present condition, is solely owing to the mugs; many of its inhabitants, having been carried into slavery, and that the remainder fled from it to avoid a like fate.

To attempt to prove the dishonour, and loss to our government, by tamely suffering such depredations, would be superfluous: both are too evident, even to need being pointed at. All that I shall say on this head, at present is; that I am fully convinced that these violences may be easily prevented; a great number of very useful subjects, restored to freedom, and their country; and perhaps, many other advantages, that cannot now be perceived, may accrue to the company, at a trivial, or even no expence; by a well conducted attack on Rekheng. A nest of pirates, enemies to mankind, and to the peace and commerce of Bengal; will be thereby destroyed. I think, I may venture to predict; that the longer, they continue unattacked, the more powerful, and courageous, they will become, till at last it will be found necessary, for the immediate preservation of all the southern parts of Bengal; to enter into an expensive, and perhaps, a bloody war with them. It must be a very considerable armed force, acting only on the defensive, to defend even the coast of Chittagong from invasion; but how can the security of this whole province, protect the inhabitants of the islands, and other southern parts of Bengal?

When Mahabut Jung, was Subahdar of Bengal, Sadarcut Mohamud Khan, was naib subah, of all the southern parts, as far west, as Ingellee. He planned an expedition against Rekheng which being approved by his superior, he raised an army of twelve thousand men, consisting of one hundred horsemen, five hundred bildars (pioneers), two thousand five hundred coolies, and the remaining number of infantry of different denominations: his artillery consisted of ten pieces of cannon. With this army, he marched towards Rekheng; the bildars, and a certain number of coolies, preceding in one day's march, in order to clear the road. The ammunition and provisions, were conveyed as far as Rawmoo, in four hundred boats, and there landed, to be carried with the army: The boats then proceeded to the river Nawf, to assist the army in passing it. The army arrived at that river after nineteen days marching; and where on the point of passing it, when an order came from Mahabut Jung, for the army to return, with all possible haste. Thus ended an expedition, that cost the government, upwards of eighty thousand rupees! The order was obtained, by the influence of Sadahcut Mahmud Khan's enemies, at the durbar: who made the nawaub believe that the naib-subah, intended to make himself independent by the conquest of Rekheng; and that he would so strengthen himself, by that conquest, as to be able to support himself in the independent sovereignty, of both that country, and Chittagong. The road from Islamabad to Rawmoo, which the army was eleven days marching, was very bad; but from thence to the river Nawf marched on the sea beach, which was all the way so level, that a one horse chaise might have gone on it.

The Nawf is the limit of Chittigong, and divides it from Rekheng; it is so broad, that in the clearest weather, nothing on the opposite side, can be seen: but only the mouth of it

is here meant, as it is not known that any one ever went up it. It is thought to communicate with Pegu; but this is merely a conjecture of the natives of this province.

After the return of the army, some natives of Bengal, who had made their escape from Rekheng, related, that when it was known there, that the nawaub's army was on its march, to that country, the rajah, and most of the inhabitants, fled to the hills and woods; but that a small garrison was left in the fort, who were also soon struck with a panick, quarrelled amongst themselves, and at last deserted the fort.

Some time before Sadahcut Mahmud Khan, went on the expedition against Rekheng; he received advice, that two fleets of mug boats, were seen going to the south of the islands; that one of them, consisting of fifty or sixty boats, appeared to be going to Luckipore, by the way of Duckun Shahbazpore; and that the other fleet, of eighty or an hundred boats, was going towards the Sunderbunds. Soon after, fresh intelligence was brought, that the last mentioned fleet, was laying in Begum Gunge Nullah, in the Sunderbunds: on which the naib-subah went there with seventy or eighty armed boats, and arrived at the entrance of the nullah, when it was low water, and the mug boats stranded: he attacked them, took fifty boats, killed many men, and took two thousand two hundred prisoners; who were sent to Moorshudabad, and employed in the buildings at Mootejeel. What became of the other fleet of mug boats is not certainly known; but it is thought they got intelligence, of the defeat of their countrymen, and returned as fast as possible, to Rekheng. It was in consequence of the appearance of these fleets, that the expedition against Rekheng, was planned.

Since writing the above, the persons who were lately sent to Rekheng with a letter are returned. They report, that on their arrival, Kuddul Poree the rajah ordered them to be confined till he returned from subduing a rebellion, raised by one of his zemindars; and he, at the same time promised to give them an answer to their letter. Soon after, the rajah was killed by the zemindar, who usurped the government, and ordered them to be put to death as spies, but that by paying twenty five rupees, they were permitted to escape. They further say, that the people of Rekheng, were in expectation of an english force coming against him, and that the native inhabitants were in great fear. When these messengers in going to Rekheng, arrived at the Nawf, they travelled for some time along its banks, towards the east, and very soon came to a part of it, that is not broader than the Chittigong river near the town, over which they crossed with ease.

Islamabad June 1777

Document Number 4**Memorandum Regarding the Trade of Arracan and the Port of Akyab in the East Indies, Lat. 20° S'N Long 92° 56 ¼ E. (1849)⁵****W. F. Nuthall⁶**

The Extensive shipments of Rice which have been made from this province, during the last few years, to all parts of Europe, to America, China and the Straits, and the good quality adjudged to the grain, has given an importance to the Port of Akyab which must render any information regarding its Commerce both interesting and valuable to the Mercantile community, and it is with a hope of thus benefiting the public, and averting the loss and inconvenience which Parties have sustained from want of information, that an old Resident has been induced to publish and circulate the following notes, collected from the most authentic sources:

The Rice loading Season commences after breaking up of the Rains, of S. W. Monsoon, i.e. in all November:--at this time, grain of the last year's crop can be procured; the Natives being then able to unhusk the Paddy, and prepare it for shipment, a process which cannot be accomplished during the Rains; as it is necessary first to dry it well in the Sun. Clean Rice is never kept ready, beyond what may be required for local consumption, as it does not keep well in the damp Climate of Arracan.—Vessels have occasionally arrived before the above period, without having sent previous Orders, and thereby incurred great loss and delay.

The Harvest usually commences during the latter end of November, with the Laroong and Longphroo Rice, which is nearly all cut and exported by the end of December, or early part of January; the Latooree next ripens; and the Harvest terminates in all February with reaping the Nacrensee, which forms the most bulky part of the crop, and is partly held for exportation during and after the S. W. monsoon, and before the next crop becomes available.

Ships coming for cargo Rice of the season, should not arrive before the end of November, and for cleaned Rice, not before the end of December or the beginning of January, when the harvest having been partially made, labour can be employed in collecting, husking, and cleaning the grain for shipment.

Should it be an object to make two or more visits to the Port during the season, especially for cleaned Rice (a cargo which requires time to prepare and is not obtainable without previous orders), Funds should be deposited with an Agent to enable him to store, or bag it before the Vessel's arrival and by this means dispatch could be ensured in 8 or 10 days, whereas the usual number of laying days are from 25 to 30, and even 50 for Vessels chartered in Europe.—The mode of purchasing, being upon advances, Funds

⁵This memorandum originally appeared in the *Straits Times and Singapore Journal of Commerce* 5.456 (4 December 1849): pp. 4-5.

⁶Lieutenant W. F. Nuthall was at this time the Commander of the Aracan Battalion at Akyab.

should, if possible, invariably accompany the order at least a month before the ship's arrival.

The best months for loading are February, March and April.

The Season terminates about the middle of May, after which *no large Vessel* should remain in Harbour, as the S. W. Monsoon then prevails strong, and they would be exposed to some risk and difficulty, in crossing the Bar, where the average depth is 4 ½ to 5 fathoms at high water, and at that period a heavy sea runs.

Vessels of from 3 to 400 Tons can be loaded during the S. W. Monsoon, that is, between May and October, and proceed to Sea with perfect safety; but in such cases the cargo must be stored in Godowns before the Rains set in.

Vessels of more than 500 Tons, or drawing more water than specified below, should not be sent to this Port.

Vessels of any draft under 21 feet, find no difficulty in sailing in and out during the N. E. Monsoon.

Akyab is the only Port of grain export in Arracan: it has a fine Harbour, with good and safe anchorage in 3 ½ to 5 ½ fathoms of water: The entrance to the Harbour is rather intricate for strangers, but having once entered, a Pilot is no longer required, all the dangers being above water, and there being plenty of room to keep clear of them.

The Akyab district is intersected with Rivers and Salt water Creeks, or natural Canals, with water sufficient to admit a vessel of 3 to 400 Tons, proceeding 20 to 25 miles beyond Akyab to load, and in charter parties of Vessels for the Straits, which are loaded in bulk, it is usually stipulated that the Vessel proceeds to any place within 25 miles from Akyab. It is customary for Vessels of this draft and tonnage to go as near to the loading place as they can with safety.

Generally between 1 and 200 Vessels are loading at the same time, but most of them are small craft from the Coromandel Coast, where Paddy is taken and cleaned, for the Mauritius & Bourbon Markets.

The process of cleaning grain in Arracan is very imperfect and unsatisfactory, as it breaks and injures it without cleaning it thoroughly.

The quantity of grain exported during the last 11 years is estimated at nearly 62,000 Tons annually, but of this 50,000 Tons have been exported during the season it was reaped, and the remaining 12,000 Tons early in the following Season; this residue is available for shipment in November and December, with the provisions above as to Orders and Funds, but it is not recommended for the Europe Market.

Three distinct kinds of Rice are grown in Arracan—Nacrensee, a large bold, barley grain, rather opaque:--Laroong or Longphroo, similar to ditto, but smaller and a shade more transparent:---Latooree, a long thin, fine grain, more transparent than either of the above: On the whole they are larger, softer and more mucilaginous than those of Bengal, and consequently more subject to Weevil, yet they are much better adapted for manufacturing purposes, and have been found to keep perfectly well during a Voyage to Europe either in the partially cleaned or in the uncleaned or cargo state.

The supply of Nacrensee and Laroong is abundant, but that of Latooree is scanty; increased demand, however, is leading to its more extended cultivation, and it is expected

that in the course of a few years the present large grain will give place to a finer and more saleable article.

The following quotations may be taken as the average of past Seasons, there being the least possible difference between the prices of three kinds of Rice:---

Cleaned	Rice	per 100 Baskets	35 Co's Rs.
Cargo	do.	"	25 "
"	Paddy	"	10 "

Should the demand be great, these rates may fluctuate as high as 40 Cy's Rs. for cleaned, and 30 Co's Rs. for uncleaned or cargo Rice, but when it is moderate they sometimes fall much lower than the above quotations.

Cargoes must be engaged at the market price of the day upon which the agreement may be made, or order received; it being necessary on the part of the Agent to contract with the Brokers on the same terms.

Bags are procurable here only to a small extent, but no more than may be required for the Cargo should be brought, as the demand is limited, and on one or two occasions they have been sold at a sacrifice.

The Port Charges are 2 ½ annas per Ton, and charges for Agency 5 per cent exclusive of Packing and Shipping charges, which are 1 anna per Bag, and ½ anna for Godown rent when the Rice is packed on shore. A gratuity or fee is usually presented to the Port Master should his services be required to Pilot the Vessel to sea.

Ships in stone ballast are upon application to the Authorities, sometimes discharged them, if the stones are fit for public purposes:---but those in sand and mud, must be discharged subject to the orders of the Harbour Master, and if landed, the Boat hire is 20 Rs. per 100 Tons:--Coal ballast will fetch 8 to 10 Rs. per ton for Government Stores, according to demand.

Bamboos and Mats for dunnage are cheap and abundant, and planks may generally be had for this purpose.

The only EXPORTS' produce of the Province besides Grain, are: Sandoway Tobacco, Bees' Wax, Honey, Raw Cotton, Hides, Horns, Goor, Earth and Wood Oils, Shark's Fins, Fish Maws, Chillies, Ginger, Cows, Bullocks, and Ponies; some of these can be obtained in moderate quantities, but the supply of the rest is trifling, and is secured by the Natives for coasting Trade,—The Export next in importance to Grain is Salt.

N. B. Fish, Meat, Bread, Vegetables, and other ordinary articles of consumption are generally to be bought in the Market, but every other description of Store should be be [sic] fully provided elsewhere, as they are not usually to be had here.

The following average Grain Export of the District of Akyab for the last 11 years shews the profitable Nature of the Trade.

Average number of Vessels 225—Ditto of Tonnage 62, 435, Average quantity of Pdy, Maunds 11, 47, 538—Value do Co.'s Rs. 4,73523

[Average] quantity of Rice [maund] 5, 71, 573—
value of do. " 4, 25, 419

Total quality of Grain, maunds 16, 19, 111 Total Value of Grain Co's Rs. 8, 98, 942

THE IMPORTS are unimportant, there being no Market for any quantity of one article, a miscellaneous cargo of a small quantity of the undermentioned Goods would probably find ready sale. Piece Goods, Book Muslins, Jaconets, Damask, plain, white and figured; Long Cloth, Cotton Velvet, Gingham, Chintzes, Woollens coarse red and blue; Turkey red Twill, Twist or Yarn of various colours, coarse Glass and Crockery Ware, Brown Sugar, Sugar Candy, Sago, Cheroots, Coconut and Mustard Oil, Ghee, Soap, Muskets, Iron, Nails, Pit Saws, Umbrellas, Beetle Nut, and Bengal Rum.

N. B. All printed Piece Goods should be of the brightest colours. This being a free Port, all articles, excepting Opium, which is the Government Monopoly; are exempt from duty.

Monies

The currency of Arracan is Company's rupees: Sovereigns and Bank of Bengal Notes are not easily exchanged, nor are Bills negotiable to any considerable amount:--Dollars can always be exchanged at 220 Rs. per 100 drs. And Doubloons at 14 Co.'s Rs. per Tolah weight.

To convert Dollars into rupees multiply by 11 and divide by 5.

N.B. Specie is always required to be laid down for the purchase of Cargoes, and the monthly Steamer to and from Calcutta and Moulmain, and the regular Trading schooners afford opportunity for obtaining it from those places.

Weights.

A basket of rice, Arracan Weight,
Is 12 seers 85 tolals each or lbs 28, 228

A basket of Paddy ditto, is about 9 Seers.

A Tolah is equivalent in weight to a company's Piece.

80 ditto lbs. 2.057 or 27 maunds or 85 baskets of Rice to 1 Ton

Nearly 1 seer

82-1-1 lbs or 40 seers to 1 maund

133 $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs to 1 picul

45 piculs to 1 coyan or 228 $\frac{1}{4}$ baskets of Rice, Penang Weight

40 ditto to 1 do. Or 203 do. Do. Singapore weight.

160 viss to 365 lbs.

1 do. To 35-5 lbs or 140 Tollahs, or 100 Tickals of 252 Grains each.

25 Maunds or 85 baskets of Pice [sic] to 1 ton.

To convert Tons into baskets multiply the former by 427 and divide by 5:--or to convert baskets into Tons multiply the former by 5 and divide by 427.

To convert into Maunds, multiply the former by 109 and divide[d] by 4:--and the reverse, as above, to convert Maunds into Tons.

To convert Indian weight into Avoirdupois, multiply the weight in Seers by 72. And divide by 35, and the result will be weight in lbs. Avoirdupois; or multiply the weight in Maunds by 36. And divide by 49, and the result will be the weight in cwt. Avoirdupois.

Akyab, (signed) W. F. Nuthall, Lieutenant, in Command Arracan Battalion.

BOOK REVIEWS

Books for review should be sent to the Book Review Editor at:

Burma Research
Department of History
SOAS
Thornhaugh Street
Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG
United Kingdom

The book review editor, William Womack, can be contacted at: willw@soas.ac.uk

THANT MYINT-U. *The Making of Modern Burma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2001. 284 pp. Introduction, bibliography, index. £16.95. Paperback.

Towards the conclusion of his fine and valuable book, Thant Myint-U explains that he has tried to paint, “in broad and tentative strokes”, how the old world of the Konbaung dynasty was transformed into British Burma of the late nineteenth century. Certainly, in places the strokes are broad, for this text covers a hundred years of turbulent times, encompassing the reigns of six Alaungpaya monarchs and fifteen years of colonial rule.

For many years, Burma has been singularly lacking in general histories. This book is not a complete history of the country, focusing solely on the nineteenth century—a period that the author believes is most relevant to our understanding of modern Burma. In places, there is extraordinary attention to detail, particularly in the early chapters, enabling the reader to see Burma as it was in the century’s first quarter. The majority of the population then lived in the capital or were spread along the Irrawaddy valley in small villages. Kinship played an important part in the villagers’ lives and intermarriage between cross cousins was particularly prevalent in many of the small communities. The explanation of the derivation of many of the Burmese words used throughout the book is another pleasing feature. Refreshing, too, are the scattered pen pictures of notable characters appearing in the text. These brief biographies give life to the material.

However, besides broad strokes, there are also times when a finer brush stroke is used. In Chapter 3, “The Court of Ava”, the author is a pointillist, carefully laying on, instead of colours, information so that the Court and its inhabitants—the kings, their royal households, the royal agencies and the Burmese nobility who dwelt within the Royal City—merge into a vivid picture of a court that seems supremely capable of managing its kingdom. While the business of the Royal City continued to remain in the hands of the king and his ministers, other methods were used to maintain control of the Irrawaddy valley and the more distant territories. Authority in the valley was carefully delegated to provincial governors, *myowun*, limited to shortish tenure in these positions to reduce their influence, while tributary princes known as *sawbwa* maintained control of the less settled areas. It is rare to see the kingdom of Ava depicted so thoroughly, appearing powerful and assured in its possessions and its military prowess. The Court’s supreme confidence in challenging the British in 1824 is well explained and understandable.

As the book progresses, the author carefully builds up his picture of nineteenth century Ava. The endeavours of King Mindon to modernise his depleted kingdom are examined. His reforms and his failures are carefully noted, and the loss of the valuable south, once Ava's breadbasket, begins to appear an insurmountable obstacle to Ava's future success.

The chapter that discusses the pacification of Burma by the British (for there were troubles in Lower Burma as well as Upper Burma) is handled in an exemplary fashion by the author, without unnecessary hyperbole. As the author explains, even before the British arrival, the Court's control of the kingdom had been fraying, especially in the districts close to Mandalay. The capture of the Royal City simply triggered further disorder. While the British endeavoured to bring some semblance of order to their new territory, resistance against their authority increased. The three related elements to this resistance are discussed rationally. These were increased banditry, surging patriotic sentiment among some princes and members of the old aristocracy and finally, a return of millenarianism. There was, as the author explains, passive as well as active resistance, with some members of the Hluttaw contributing in this fashion.

Confronted by such a demanding task as portraying the emergence of modern Burma, there are times, understandably, when the author falters. Burma specialists will note errors, generalisations and the occasional spelling and numerical mistake. Yenangyaung, for example, is on the east bank, not the west bank of the Irrawaddy. References in the index referring to "Mekkaya, Prince of (Maung Myo)" also include pages on which Mindon's son, the Mekkaya Prince appears. How can Mindon's chief queen, a daughter of Bagyidaw, be a full sister of Pagan, when earlier we have been told that he is Mindon's elder half-brother? Most of these, I hope, will be corrected in the next edition. Small as some of these errors may appear, they do detract from the book, which is a shame. For an important work of this nature, it also seems surprising that the publisher has not insisted on a more extensive index plus a glossary of the invaluable Burmese terminology used throughout the book.

MARILYN LONGMUIR

Independent scholar

ROBERT H. TAYLOR (ed.). *Burma: Political Economy under Military Rule*. New York: Palgrave. 2001. vii, 168pp. Introduction, tables, index. Paperback.

While the rule of the military council of Burma (State Peace and Development Council [SPDC], formerly State Law and Order Council [SLORC]) is in its fifteenth year, the question of how best to develop the country still divides scholars, politicians, and activists. The eight essays edited by Robert Taylor reflect the divisions as well the assumptions shared, which Taylor encapsulates in his introduction as "a shared pessimism" (p. 3). The expectations of rapid change, raised in the turbulent summer of 1988, have evaporated, and the authors, gathering in 1998 after a ten-year interval, approached their topic in a somber mood. Still, the differences in approach, analysis, and policy suggestions are stark.

On the one hand, two authors put the blame for Burma's political, economic, and social woes squarely on the military government. Both Jürgen Ruland ("Burma Ten Years after the Uprising: The Regional Dimension") and Josef Silverstein ("Burma and the World:

A Decade of Foreign Policy under the State Law and Order Restoration Council”) focus on Burma’s foreign affairs, contrasting Europe’s and America’s stiff opposition with the milder stand of ASEAN states and China’s support. Both agree that “constructive engagement” has not yielded significant results, but they part ways where future policies are concerned. Whereas Silverstein defines the military government as such as the root of Burma’s troubles, Ruland suggests a softening stance of the west should the Burmese government initiate piecemeal reform.

He thus joins hands with Robert Taylor, David Steinberg, and Martin Smith, all of whom advocate a more constructive dialogue between the Burmese government, the opposition, and foreign states. Taylor (“Stifling Change: The Army Remains in Command”) combines his analysis of Burma as a country lacking key ingredients for quick social and political improvement with an acerbic critique of western policies, which he says are depriving themselves of any influence by isolating Burma. Similarly, Smith (“Burmese Politics after 1988: An Era of New and Uncertain Change”) notes a “basic inability of the two sides to communicate” (p. 29) in the opposition’s inelastic confrontational stance directed against a government that lists repression as its main tool of persuasion. The power struggle in Rangoon, he concludes, may not have alleviated poverty in the countryside, whereas the government’s cease fires with ethnic minorities at least removed one major threat to life and property. David Steinberg (“The Burmese Conundrum: Approaching Reformation of the Political Economy”) similarly advocates incremental change instead of a forced switch to a nominal multi-party system which, he holds, is unlikely to emerge in the face of the military’s resistance and is even more unlikely to lead to a genuine and functioning democracy soon. Instead, structural reforms of the economy are to remove obstacles to socioeconomic development, NGOs might help on humanitarian issues and on creating a civil society, and foreign brokers might guide the domestic parties to compromise. In perhaps the theoretically most ambitious contribution, Stefan Collignon (“Human Rights and the Economy in Burma”) seeks to link democracy, social structure, legal and economic institutions, and long-term growth. Human rights and democracy, he argues, are based on a strong middle class emerging from a successful market economy, which in turn can only flourish on the basis of trust in legal and monetary institutions. Since such trust is lacking in Burma, several phases of unsustainable economic growth in the last thirty years always alternated with years of stagnation. Sound macroeconomics, including a robust monetary system, are crucial for sustained growth and consequent development; therefore, aid should be conditional on both political and economic reforms.

In a more practical mood, David Tegenfeld (“International Non-Government Organizations in Burma”) emphasizes the positive impact on health and the growth of social capital that non-government organizations have, and calls for their support. This is echoed by Seng Raw (“Views from Myanmar: An Ethnic Minority Perspective”), a Kachin community worker, who gauges that foreign funds for projects in the ethnic minorities’ areas would critically diminish the gap with the core of Burma.

Hence, the book offers a rich harvest of well-argued and passionate views on Burma, and the criticisms are minor. To begin with, the title does not reflect the breadth of topics covered. It is sometimes confusing to read a book printed in 2001 that is based on the state of politics in early 1999. Finally, some of the papers overlap thematically; it would have been better to keep their foci separate.

JÖRG SCHENDEL

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ARCHIVE REPORT

THE ARCHIVES OF THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY (VOC) AS THEY RELATE TO BURMA

Wil O. Dijk

The archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) are preserved largely at the National Archives at The Hague (previously the *Algemeen Rijksarchief*/General State Archives). Though the information contained within this vast collection of records and accounts forms an invaluable source for the reconstruction of the (economic) history of seventeenth century Burma, they have never before been examined. This is indeed surprising since practically everything written between 1634 and 1680 by usually well informed VOC employees in Burma is still extant, making this a major primary source for just such a purpose.

The VOC archives have been categorized with each individual volume simply designated VOC and numbered consecutively. The most important sets relating to Burma are given below in alphabetical order followed by the respective VOC numbers where applicable.

Bataviaasch Uitgaand Briefboek, 1621-1792. (Batavia's outgoing letter book, 1621-1792 - letters from the VOC's head-office in Batavia to the various factories in Asia and the *Heeren XVII*). This important series reflects the VOC's grand design in that it sets out Company policy in the East. There are letters stipulating how trade should be conducted, from where certain goods should be procured, the places where private traders could operate, when account books should be closed, the rules on waging war, how to behave towards kings and other rulers. Letters relating specifically to Burma date from 1624 to 1686.
VOC 849-VOC 1052.

Hooge Regering = Hooge Regering te Batavia. Beschrijving van een collectie stukken, in 1862-63 uit Batavia naar Nederland verzonden, voornamelijk het bestuur der Hoge Regeering te Batavia over de buitenkantoren betreffende, 1602-1827. (A collection of documents sent in 1862-63 from Batavia to the Netherlands, mostly concerning Company policy formulated by the High Government in Batavia with respect to its subsidiaries in the East Indies, 1602-1827).
This series contains Batavia's view on the misconduct and death of Company employees in Syriam, the general ban on Dutch wives at undefended trading posts, and proposals to restart the Company's Burma trade. For Choromandel: *Hooge Regering* 300 to 504.

Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren uit Indië aan de Heren XVII en de Kamer Amsterdam, 1607-1694. (Letters and Papers from the East Indies received by the *Heeren XVII* [the Board of Directors] and the Amsterdam Chamber, 1607-1694). Practically all research is based on this important series that forms the main body of these archives. Please note that everything for the year 1611 and books II and III for the year 1614 are missing. Material on Burma from 1607 to 1689 is in VOC 1054-VOC 1432, the year 1695 in VOC 1540 and 1745 in VOC 2614.
VOC 1053-VOC 3986.

Note:

One will find nothing under 'Burma' in the *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren* or anywhere else in the VOC archives for that matter. The Dutch always referred to Irrawaddy Burma as (*The Kingdom of*) *Pegu* or (*The Court at*) *Ava*. Arakan on the other hand was always called just that. Additional information on the VOC activities in Burma must not only be gleaned from the Choromandel and Bengal documents, but also from those dealing with places such as Siam, Persia, Ceylon, Japan, Mocha, and Batavia.

Plakaatboek - Nederlandsch-Indisch plakaatboek, 1602-1811 (Book of Dutch East Indies Edicts).

Published in 17 volumes, the last volume is the systematic register. Here we find edicts passed in Batavia on the procurement and use of coins, including Chinese copper coins from Burma.

Resolutions: Copie-Resoluties van Gouverneur-Generaal en Raden, 1637-1791 (Copies of Resolutions passed by the Governor-General and Councillors, 1637-1791). Here are, among others, the resolutions passed in 1744 and 1757 on a possible renewal of the VOC's Burma trade. There is also much on Batavia's perpetual concern to provide its citizens with coins suitable for use as small change in the market places.

VOC 661-VOC 827.

Several of the private collections housed at the National Archives are important for Burma as well, such as those of Van Delden, Geleynssen de Jongh, and Sweers. The Van Delden collection is unique in that it consists of filing cards with personal details of many VOC servants. This valuable source is not generally accessible to the public but the custodians are willing to supply photocopies.

After having painstakingly collected and transcribed everything on Burma, it seems a shame to let it all go to waste. I have therefore decided, provided there is sufficient interest, to make my entire collection of transcripts (in Dutch, with English translations to follow in due course) available on CD-rom together with a complete listing of all the VOC volumes containing material on Burma.

Wil O. Dijk

Leiden University

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

The SBBR is keen on drawing attention to critical new research in the form of dissertations. As dissertations represent the most recent work, but have not had sufficient time to see print, the SBBR invites the submission of abstracts of dissertations completed in the past five years (from current issue date). Abstracts can be sent in hard copy to the main editorial address or in soft copy (word format) to burmaresearch@soas.ac.uk.

M. W. C.

The Mandalay Economy: Upper Burma's External Trade, c. 1850–90

Heidelberg: Ph.D. dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 2002/3. xiv, 528p.

JÖRG SCHENDEL

Much research on the modern economy of Southeast Asia in general, and on Burma in particular, has strongly emphasized the chasm between the precolonial era and a colonial period during which disruptive outside forces transformed state and society. Even though recent work on early modern Southeast Asia has largely destroyed the notion of static continuity by referring to signs of dynamic change and expansion, interpretations of the early nineteenth century have mostly been under the negative impression of the eventual fate of many Southeast Asian polities, that is, foreign takeover. Historical writing on Burma exemplifies this tendency. Great Britain assumed control over Lower Burma, including all of the seaboard, after two wars in 1824–6 and 1852–3, and Upper Burma was annexed in 1886. To a marked degree, this time has been characterized as one of disintegration and collapse: not only did the Burmese dynasty fail to deflect increasingly severe British commercial and political pressures, to which it eventually succumbed, but the loss of political independence was preceded by the breakdown of production and trade.

This dissertation sets out to see the period not through the perspective of annexation, but in its own terms. Based on a wide range of Burmese manuscripts and publications, British government files, business papers, and statistics collected in Burma, India, and Great Britain, it is argued that strong internal dynamics interconnected with vivid responses to external market opportunities. The ensuing steep expansion of external trade enhanced and reshaped preexisting trends towards commercialization and monetization and towards a more pronounced spatial division of labor and diversification of output. Upper Burma's inhabitants increasingly combined rice production for their own needs with employment in handicrafts and forestry, growing cash crops, and rearing cattle for export to Lower Burma, the Shan States, Yunnan, and overseas. Returns from exports, together with the cash released from seasonal labor in Lower Burma, paid for imports of rice, provisions, and growing amounts of manufactures. Such a flexible economic strategy allowed to respond to improving terms of trade and seems to have improved Upper Burma's purchasing power.

These trends were closely connected with changes in the political economy. Under the double impact of external (British) pressures and royal reformist zeal, the kingdom experienced moderate institutional change, which led to the removal of some barriers to traffic and enhanced the protection of property. While this helped to boost commodity trade, it did not generate stability and trust sufficient to attract much long-term foreign investment. One partial exception was teak forestry, where elaborate contracts and concessions were developed over time and honored to such a degree as to warrant substantial sums to be invested. At the same time, royal monopolies often excluded independent merchants. In response, the traders of Burmese, European, Chinese, Indian, and Persian extraction adopted different strategies of full or selective cooperation with the king, whereas some insisted on purely private business. Thereby, each group sought to maximize the advantage drawn from its specific material resources and culturally-shaped business skills. The same considerations influenced their varying stance towards British consular support and mixed Anglo-Burmese jurisdiction.

Hence, Upper Burma developed in a dynamic way, but much different from the contemporaneous transformation of Lower Burma into an export-oriented monocrop economy under British law.

Oil in Burma: The Extraction of “Earth-Oil” to 1914

Ph.D. dissertation, University of Queensland, May 1999.

MARILYN V. LONGMUIR

This thesis is an in-depth study of the earth-oil industry of Burma until 1914. The focus is principally upon the establishment of the modern commercial oil industry and the difficulties it faced. However, the earlier industry on which the modern industry was founded, is also surveyed. This indigenous industry had been established for centuries. In the beginning, oil was first obtained from seepages and soaks; later oil wells were hand-dug nearby Yenangyaung, ‘creek of stinking water’, in Central Burma.

What has been established in this thesis is that an extensive indigenous oil industry existed at Yenangyaung. Although not as productive an industry as previously believed, these hand-dug wells supplied riverine Burma with earth-oil. This unrefined oil was much-desired and was used as a preservative for wooden buildings and monasteries, for the caulking of multifarious boats, and as a cheap, but smoky illuminant. Indications are that the oil was even exported to India.

Perhaps the most unusual feature of the pre-colonial industry was that the ‘Reserves’ of Twingon and Beme, the location of the hand-dug wells, were in the hands of a group of hereditary owners, known as *twinzayo*; usually considered to be twenty-four in number, they controlled the industry. However, in the second half of the nineteenth century, King Mindon became involved in the industry, which then became a royal monopoly.

In particular, this thesis explores the later relationship between the *twinzayo* and the *twinsa*, (well-owners, with no hereditary claims on the Reserve), and the British administration. On three separate occasions, the British administration upheld the rights of *twinzayo*. First, in 1886, again in 1893, and on the third occasion, in 1908 when an inquiry was held to investigate the condition of the *Twinza* Reserves. In the early colonial years,

well-sites were sold. However, after 1906, companies began to lease sites from *twinzayo* and *twinza* alike. Payment of royalty on production enabled this group to retain a financial interest in their well-sites and many benefited considerably from this measure.

Already by 1885, prior to annexation, British agents were importing crude oil from Yenangyaung to Lower Burma where the product was refined into kerosene for local use, competing against the imported American product. As well, a market in India for kerosene was established, and, after annexation of Upper Burma, India was established as Burma's 'natural market'. The growth of this important export industry is followed and examined. During this period, Burmese kerosene and other petroleum by-products faced vicious competition in India from international oil giants, like Standard Oil, Shell and Royal Dutch, and establishment of this market was not an easy task. How the gutsy little Burmah Oil Company, Burma's premier oil company, a minnow compared with its rivals, succeeded, is a modern 'David and Goliath' encounter. However, Burmah Oil was fortunate to have the support of the British Admiralty, which was about to transform the Royal Navy from coal to fuel-oil powered vessels.

Astonishing as it may seem, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the Burma oil fields were the only major oil producer in the British Empire. The fields therefore became of great strategic importance to the British. To maintain this oil supply exclusively for the Empire, the government of India excluded non-British companies or British companies with a predominance of non-British shareholders from operations on the Burma fields.

During the first years of the colonial period, Burmah Oil was alone on the fields or faced minimal competition. In retrospect, it is possible to perceive that the failure of a commercial oil industry in Arakan, prior to Upper Burma's annexation, may have deterred early investors from Yenangyaung. The high hopes held for the Arakan industry were never achieved. Oil was present but not in sufficient quantities to repay investment.

The study of this industry has many aspects. The difficulties of establishing a modern oil industry on the foundation of an earlier one, which, for many years continued to work side by side with the modern industry, are portrayed; the importance of the burgeoning Indian market to the growth of the modern Burmese oil industry is stressed. As well, this thesis presents proof that a capital-poor nation like Burma must rely on foreign investment to develop capital-intensive industries.

Les Temples Excavés de la Colline de Po Win en Birmanie Centrale: Architecture, Sculpture et Peintures murales

(The Excavated Temples of Po Win Taung in Central Burma : Architecture, Sculpture and Murals)

Ph.D. dissertation, Paris Sorbonne III, March 1999

ANNE-MAY CHEW

Po Win Taung is an archeological site unique in Burma. It is located about 40 km from Monywa, in the northwest area of Central Burma. The hill of Po Win is a huge, multi-level religious complex with more than 800 excavations chiselled out of soft sandstone rock.

These rock-cut caves, which vary from a simple meditation cell to an imposing temple, are decorated in low and high reliefs on the facades. Some entrances are flanked by human or animal sculptures in the round. The grottoes which contain numerous statues of various positions (sitting, standing, reclining) are carved from the rock. More than 100 cave-temples are adorned with paintings illustrating traditional scenes such as the 28 Buddha of the Past, previous lives of Buddha Gotama and the Life of Buddha as well as scenes of daily life.

The majority of the artistic works of Po Win Taung date from the second Ava period (16th-18th centuries) designated as "Nyaung Yan" style as it started under the reign of the King Nyaung Yan (1597-1605). The paintings of Nyaung Yan style depict different sources of inspiration (Chinese, Indian, Portuguese, Siamese, Muslim and European). The works on Mandalay style of the colonial period can also be found at Po Win Taung (last quarter of 19th till mid 20th centuries). The artistic treasures of Po Win Taung show a profound syncretism harmonizing local pre-buddhist beliefs and the fundamental teachings of Theravāda Buddhism.

374 pages, 224 color photos, 77 pages of drawings

Where Jambudipa and Islamdom Converged: Religious Change and the Emergence of Buddhist Communalism in Early Modern Arakan (Fifteenth to Nineteenth Centuries)

Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, May 1999.

MICHAEL W. CHARNEY

The historian of Southeast Asian Buddhism faces many questions regarding Buddhist identity. Using the case study of Arakan (western Burma), two critical questions are pursued in this dissertation: why did Theravada Buddhism emerge as a religious identity for the majority of Arakanese and why did this religious identity develop into Burmese-Buddhist religious communalism? The prevailing literature regarding Arakanese history accepts uncritically a primordialist view of an ever-present Buddhist religious identity in Arakan from the pre-fifteenth century, that this religious identity was the chief means of collective action Arakanese throughout the early modern period, and that it always involved social exclusion of Muslims. After examining Burmese-language palm-leaf manuscripts from collections in Burma and the British Library, published royal orders and court treatises, and contemporaneous Portuguese and other foreign accounts, I concluded that these assumptions are incorrect. Burmese Buddhist communalism was clearly a phenomenon of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and generally did not define group action in preceding centuries.

This dissertation makes two inter-related arguments. First, the Burmese Buddhist religious identity developed from a complex array of influences. Ecological, climatological, social, economic, and political factors all played important roles in determining the direction of and response to religious developments. Thus, Theravada Buddhism was not the ancient and monolithic religious identity that some have interpreted it to be. Rather, the Buddhist religious identity as it has emerged today developed gradually, and primarily from

the end of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries, during the periods of Burman and British rule. This was true also of the Arakanese Muslim identity. Second, Burmese–Buddhist communalism developed out of competition between Muslims and Buddhists for new agricultural lands and attempts to survive on shrinking land plots in the British colonial economy. British colonial authorities also reduced the vitality of patron client relationships which meant the emergence of religious leaders as organizers of rural communities for collective action.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

News and announcements related to Burma research should be directed to the editor electronically at burmaresearch@soas.ac.uk or by post to:

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Inclusion is at the sole discretion of the editor and entries may be subject to editing.

ASEASUK Conference: CALL FOR PAPERS/PANELS

The Association of South-East Asian Studies of the United Kingdom (ASEASUK) will hold its 21st annual conference at the University of Leeds, 17-19 October 2003. Panel and paper proposals are invited in any of the following areas:

- humanities, including: history, arts or performance,
- social sciences, including: anthropology, politics or development studies

An opening event and reception is being planned for the evening of 17 October. We hope to run at least two consecutive panels on 18 October, and the morning of 19 October. Postgraduate students are particularly encouraged to apply. Some limited funding may be available for students and for a very small number of participants from South-East Asia.

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ASEASUK Website

The ASEASUK website has now moved from Hull University to its new home at SOAS:

<http://web.soas.ac.uk/aseasuk/index.htm>

The website includes information on the association, current research on South East Asia in the United Kingdom (and elsewhere), conference announcements, news, book reviews, and other important information.

For information on the website, contact the web manager, Michael W. Charney at mc62@soas.ac.uk or at mcharney@aol.com.

Britain-Burma Society

The Britain-Burma Society offers seminars, book reviews, and other Burma-related activities. For more information, contact Mr. Derek Brooke-Wavell at d.wavell@ntlworld.com or go to the website at:

<http://www.shwepla.net/Myanmar/index.htm>

2002-2003 Seminars held by the Britain-Burma Society:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 7 February 2002 | Helga So-Hartmann. "Life in the Southern Chin Hills" |
| 19 March 2002 | Shelby Tucker. "Forbidden Tracts." |
| 7 May 2002 | Desmond Kelly. "Kelly's Myanmar Campaign." |
| 12 June 2002 | William Womack. "The Art of Tattoo." |
| 7 November 2002 | Norma Joseph. "A Dawn Like Thunder." |
| 12 December 2002 | Sir Nicholas Fenn and Lady Fenn. "Magic Places, Magic Times." |
| 3 February 2003 | Victoria Billing. "Myanmar, 1999-2002." |
| 11 March 2003 | Michael W. Charney. "Pre-colonial Myanmar Boats." |
| 8 May 2003 | Daw Khyne U Mar. Title TBA. |
| 18 June 2003 | Wendy Law-Yone. Title TBA. |

The October reception for the Britain-Burma Society will be held on 1 October 2003.

For updated information on seminars and other activities, see

<http://www.shwepla.net/Myanmar/index.htm>.

REMEMBERING WORLD WAR II IN BURMA: The Inauguration of Burma Campaign Society

In 1989, a unique organisation was formed by British and Japanese veterans from the Burma Campaign who wished to be reconciled over the enmities of 60 years ago. Members of The Burma Campaign Fellowship Group (BCFG) chose to wind up their association at their AGM last year, both because of their age and because they believe that they have successfully achieved their goal.

Out of BCFG arose a new organisation, the Burma Campaign Society (BCS). Some members wanted to build further on the achievements of BCFG, which was awarded both the Japanese Foreign Minister's Award, and a Japan Festival award for its work. Some believe they continue to have a responsibility for an annual memorial for their comrades who died in Burma, while others value the annual reunion. There is also a younger contingent who see the importance of a forum for the discussion not only of the Burma Campaign but also other aspects of Britain and Japan's encounter during the Second World War and of its aftermath. No bilateral forum exists for the non-recriminatory discussion of war-related issues and its lack is particularly felt by a number of young people in Japan who have an interest in the UK and the history of British-Japanese relations..

BCS is therefore primarily a historical study society which aims to explore and debate issues which concern Britain and Japan's encounter during the Second World War. It incorporates the name of Burma to recognise the fact that 95% of this encounter took place in Burma. The Society holds a discussion meeting each 'term' to explore further British and Japanese perspectives on significant events and attitudes of the Pacific War, as affected Britain. Additionally BCS arranges for veterans, British and Japanese, where possible, to meet with younger groups, at schools and universities, to talk about their wartime experiences. Every year BCS is also involved in the organisation of a cathedral service of Reconciliation and Forgiveness, involving a joint 'memorial' and an act of reconciliation between old enemies. The service, last year in Coventry Cathedral, will this year be held at Canterbury Cathedral on 17 August. BCS also plays a leading role in the campaign to make this nationally the theme of church services each year, on the Sunday following the 15th August. The Society also works to record accurate information about Britain and Japan's wartime encounter and it has started a website to bring together related archival material (www.burmacampaignsociety.org). Finally, another important task is to support the Friends of the Burma Campaign Memorial Library, at SOAS, and the collection of books, in English and Japanese, on the Burma Campaign, which are in the Memorial Library's bibliography, which have not yet been obtained.

For further information about The Burma Campaign Society, contact:

The Honorary Secretary,
The Burma Campaign Society,
19 Norland Square,
London W11 4PU
United Kingdom

Tel: 020 7221 6985

Fax: 020 7 792 1757,

Email: info@burmacampaignsociety.org.

A website is in the process of being set up at: www.burmacampaignsociety.org.

The BCS also produces a newsletter (issue number 2 was released in March 2003). For information on the newsletter and to send in information for inclusion, contact:

Mr. John White
25 Cadogan Place
London SW1X 9SA
United Kingdom

Tel/Fax. 020-7235-4034

“Relics and Relic Worship in the Early Buddhism of India and Burma”

The Second Annual Meeting of the International Academic Network on "Relics and Relic Worship in the Early Buddhism of India and Burma" took place in Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge from 17 - 19 March 2003. The network runs for five years with its existing, limited membership. It enjoys the support of the British Academy, the University of Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College and the Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy. The coordinators are Professor Karel van Kooij, Professor of Indian Art and Archaeology, University of Leiden and Dr Janice Stargardt, Director of the Cambridge Project on Ancient Civilization in South East Asia, Department of Geography and Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge. The general theme for this year's discussions was how to distinguish among relics, burials and deposits.

The following people presented papers:

Professor Karel van Kooij: "The Golden Mount in Bangkok: relics and burials," and "The Stupa as a Deposit-Box."

Ms Anna Slaczka, Ph.D. student, Centre for Non-Western Studies, University of Leiden: "Superstructure Deposits in Cambodia; Texts and Archaeology."

Professor Myneni Krishna Kumari, Head of the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, Andhra University, Vishakapatnam: "Archaeological Context of Small Stupas and Reliquaries; evidence from Andhra."

Mr Lance Cousins, President of the Pali Text Society: "Cetiya and Relic; the textual sources in the Pali Canon."

Dr Michael Willis, Keeper of the Indian Collections, Asia Department of the British Museum: "Decorations on the Ahichhatra Reliquary."

Dr Janice Stargardt: "Burials, Relics and Deposits in 3rd century Andhra and 4th - 5th century Burma."

Detailed discussions of these advanced research topics ensued both during and after the conference sessions as the network was largely residential in Sidney Sussex College. The feeling during the final planning meeting was that a publishable body of research has emerged from the two meetings of the network that have taken place so far.

Dr Julia Shaw, British Academy Post-doctoral Fellow at Merton College, Oxford became a member of the network this year. Much to our regret, Professor Susan Huntington, Dean of Graduate Studies of the University of Ohio at Columbus was unable to attend the meeting this year but will continue to contribute to the network.

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Living Bibliography of Myanmar/Burma Research

The *Living Bibliography of Myanmar/Burma Research* (formerly the *Living Bibliography of Burma Studies*) is an ongoing project conducted by Dr. Michael W. Charney in the Department of History at SOAS. The goal of this bibliography is to eventually include a comprehensive, annotated, and categorized listing of all published research on Burma. You will need adobe acrobat to read this pdf file.

<http://web.soas.ac.uk/burma/secondary.pdf>

(please note that this is a large file and will take several minutes to appear on your screen)

For more information, please contact Mike Charney at mc62@soas.ac.uk

Introduction to the Online Burma/Myanmar Library

<http://www.burmalibrary.org>

Librarian: David Arnott
Email: darnott@iprolink.ch

The Online Burma/Myanmar Library is a database which functions as an annotated, classified and hyperlinked index to full texts of individual Burma documents on the Internet. It also houses a growing collection of articles, conference papers, theses, books, reports, archives and directories on-site (e.g. the 17MB archive of the Burma Press Summary). The Librarian requests help from specialists to refine the structure and add content.

Need for the Library

The Internet currently holds more than 100,000 Burma-related documents, from short news items to complete books, scattered over more than 500 websites (not all of which have internal search functions) run by the UN system, governments, academic institutions, media sites, listserv archives, and other groups. The volume is growing rapidly as more and more organisations choose to publish on the Internet. Even using modern search engines it is difficult and time-consuming to research this widely-scattered material. There is clearly need for a central index.

Structure

This is what the Online Burma/Myanmar Library seeks to provide. Launched in October 2001, it is organised on a database (using MySQL software, in combination with PHP) into 60 top-level categories based on traditional library classifications, with a hierarchy of some 850 sub-categories. These hold approximately 4000 links (mostly annotated, with keywords and descriptions) to individual documents, and about 400 links to websites which in turn give access to another 100,000 or so documents. The database allows rapid searching in all or specific fields – description/keyword, date, language (we are building up our collection of non-English texts), title, author, source/publisher etc. It can also be browsed through the subject hierarchies. A third way of finding material is provided by a simple alphabetical list of the 900 categories and sub-categories. We are using the Greenstone digital library software to build the collection of documents housed on-site. This software allows full-text searching, though at present only the Burma Press Summary uses this feature fully (we would like to hear from people with experience of this software).

Building the Library

The Library's starting point historically was the Burma Peace Foundation's documentation of the human rights situation in Burma, and with the UN Burma material, this area still comprises about half the total number of items. This ratio is falling as the other sections -- Bibliographies/research, Economy, Geography, Health, History, Military, Politics and Government, Society and Culture, etc. -- are built up. We warmly invite specialists to provide various levels of input in their areas, from commenting on the structure, sending web addresses (URLs) of online items that should be added, emailing documents to be placed directly on the site, to editing whole sections or sub-sections. Editing can be done online from any computer with web access. Several scholars have already agreed to work on particular sections. We trust that more will offer their assistance and that these will include people from Burma so that the Library can develop sections in the different languages of Burma.

We are particularly keen to build up the section of bibliographies of individual Burma scholars. So far, we have only four, at:

<http://www.burmalibrary.org/show.php?cat=1327&lo=d&sl=0>

Please send more.

With regard to Burma-related documents in electronic form which are not on the Internet, the Library encourages owners (individuals, organisations, or academic institutions) to place them on their own websites and send the URLs to the Librarian, or send them to be placed directly on the Library site. Important documents which do not exist in electronic form, and which are not listed for digitisation by any library, will eventually be scanned and housed on the Library.

We would like to hear from librarians who are digitising collections which contain texts relating to Burma, especially if these will be on open access. Please tell us not only which documents have been digitised, with URLs, but also which are in line for digitising. If there is a need, the Library could maintain a page listing these, as a means of reducing duplication, and suggestions for prioritization. We urge digital librarians and the producers of online periodicals with mixed content to give each document an individual URL wherever possible, for direct access -- a public resource is enhanced if users can link directly to individual documents without having to go through the process of searching or browsing.

Enthusiastic Welcome

Since its launch in 2001, the Online Burma/Myanmar Library has received an enthusiastic welcome from a wide range of users, from senior Burma experts to student activists. The Asian Studies WWW Monitor gave the Library its highest rating (5 stars and "Scholarly usefulness: Essential"). The Librarian hopes that those involved in Burma research will welcome and use this new resource and help to develop its structure and content.

New Appointments

Alexandra Green (PhD, SOAS) has taken up her new position as curator of Asian Art at Denison University. Dr. Green is responsible for researching and publishing Denison's collection of Burmese and Chinese art. The bulk of the collection is Burmese material, which includes Buddha images, lacquerware, and hill textiles. The collection also includes Chinese material which largely consists of rubbings and Qing dynasty robes. It also has a few high-quality Thai Buddha images, and then bits and pieces from a variety of other South and Southeast Asian countries.

Dr. Green can be contacted at: greenar@denison.edu

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